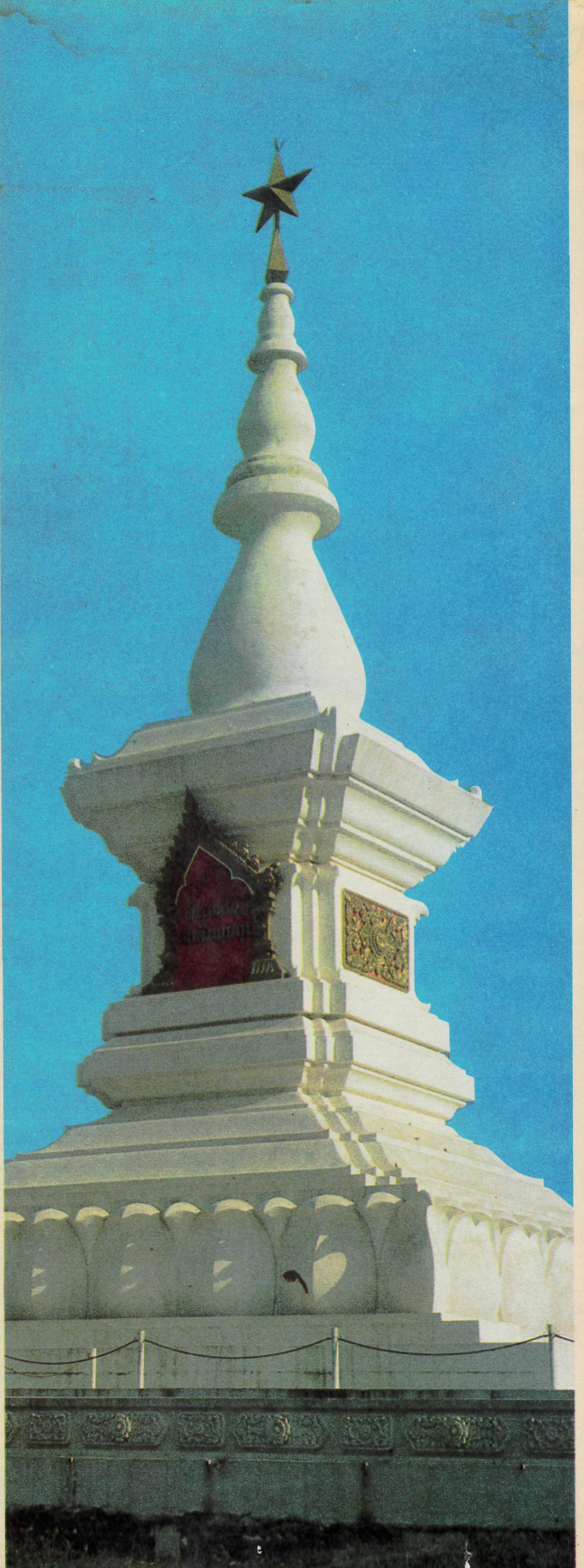
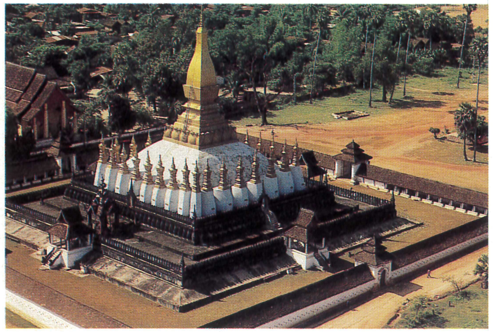


LAOS

LAOS

COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD

LAOS



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LAOS

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In 1985, my country is going to celebrate two great anniversaries: the 30th anniversary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) and 10 years since the Lao People's Democratic Republic was proclaimed.

For many years the Lao people, led by the Party and aspiring to achieve national liberation, fought against colonialists and imperialist aggressors. That heroic struggle resulted in a great victory: on December 2, 1975, the National Congress of People's Representatives proclaimed the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

In the ten years that have passed since then, the toilers, led by their tried and tested vanguard, the People's Revolutionary Party, have achieved a great deal in building the foundations of socialism in Laos. To implement the important tasks put forward by the Third Congress of the LPRP, the Lao people have achieved all the targets of the five-year plan for their country's social and economic development (1981–85). The working class, peasants and intellectuals make a worthy contribution to the cause of the revolution, that is, to the construction of a new society that will give the Lao people a happy life.

Laos is an equal member of the socialist community and its outpost in South-East Asia. Our Party, government and the people understand that the Lao revolution's gains and achievements depend on the great aid and assistance rendered to Laos by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. A growing consolidation of forces and extensive all-round co-operation with the Soviet Union and the socialist community as a whole are the main principles of the consistent policy pursued by our Party and the state.

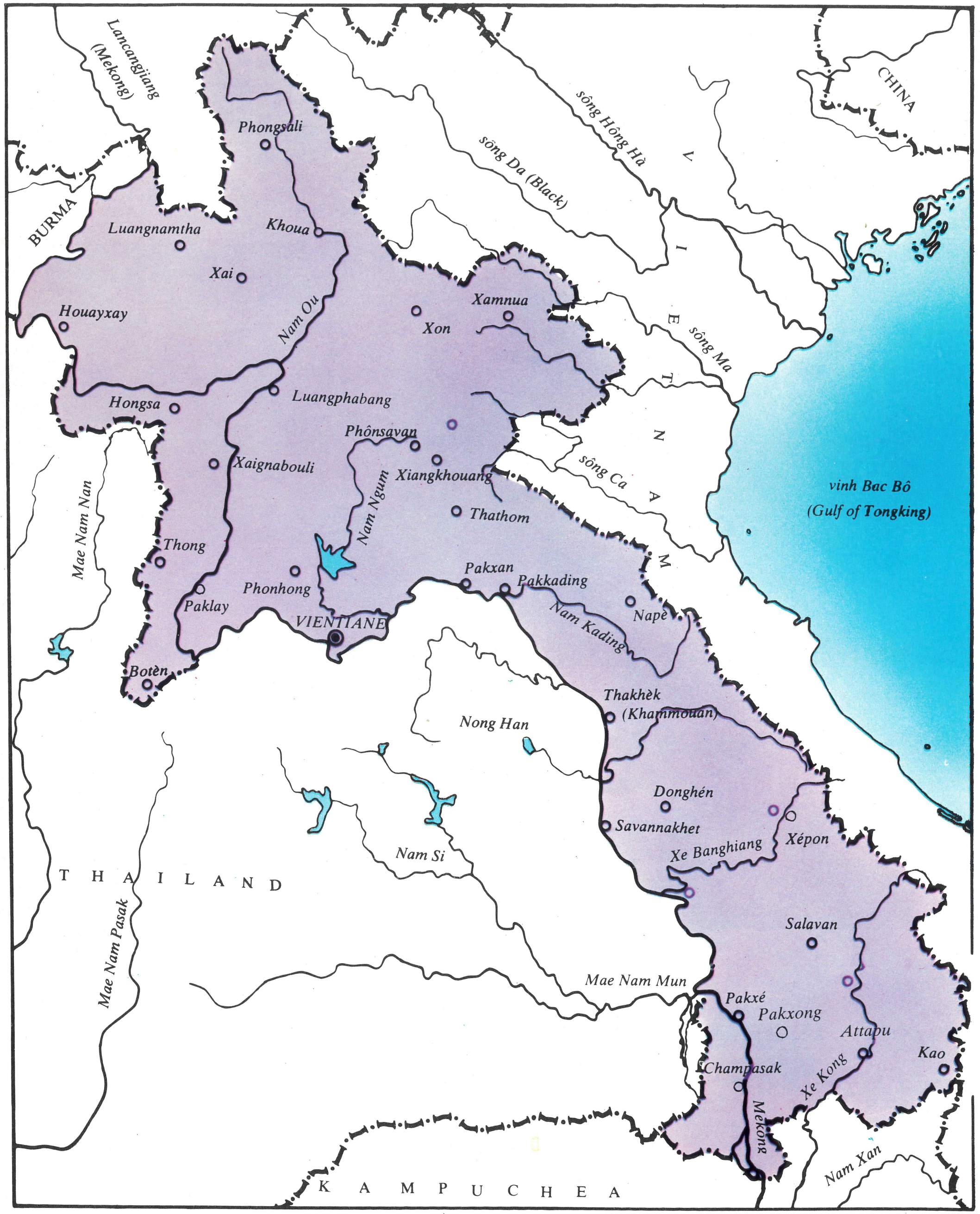
Together with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea, Laos stands for turning South-East Asia into a zone of peace, stability and co-operation, supports its peoples' peace effort and their aspirations for national independence, democracy and socialism.

Dear readers, this edition comes out in a jubilee year. As you turn over the pages of this book, you will gain some idea of my country's character, history and ancient culture, as well as learn about the Lao people's constructive efforts and about independent, united and socialist Laos, a country working towards a happy future.

The Lao people are peaceful and hospitable, talented and industrious. They are eager to make their country more beautiful than ever.

Kaysone Phomvihane

Kaysone Phomvihane, Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

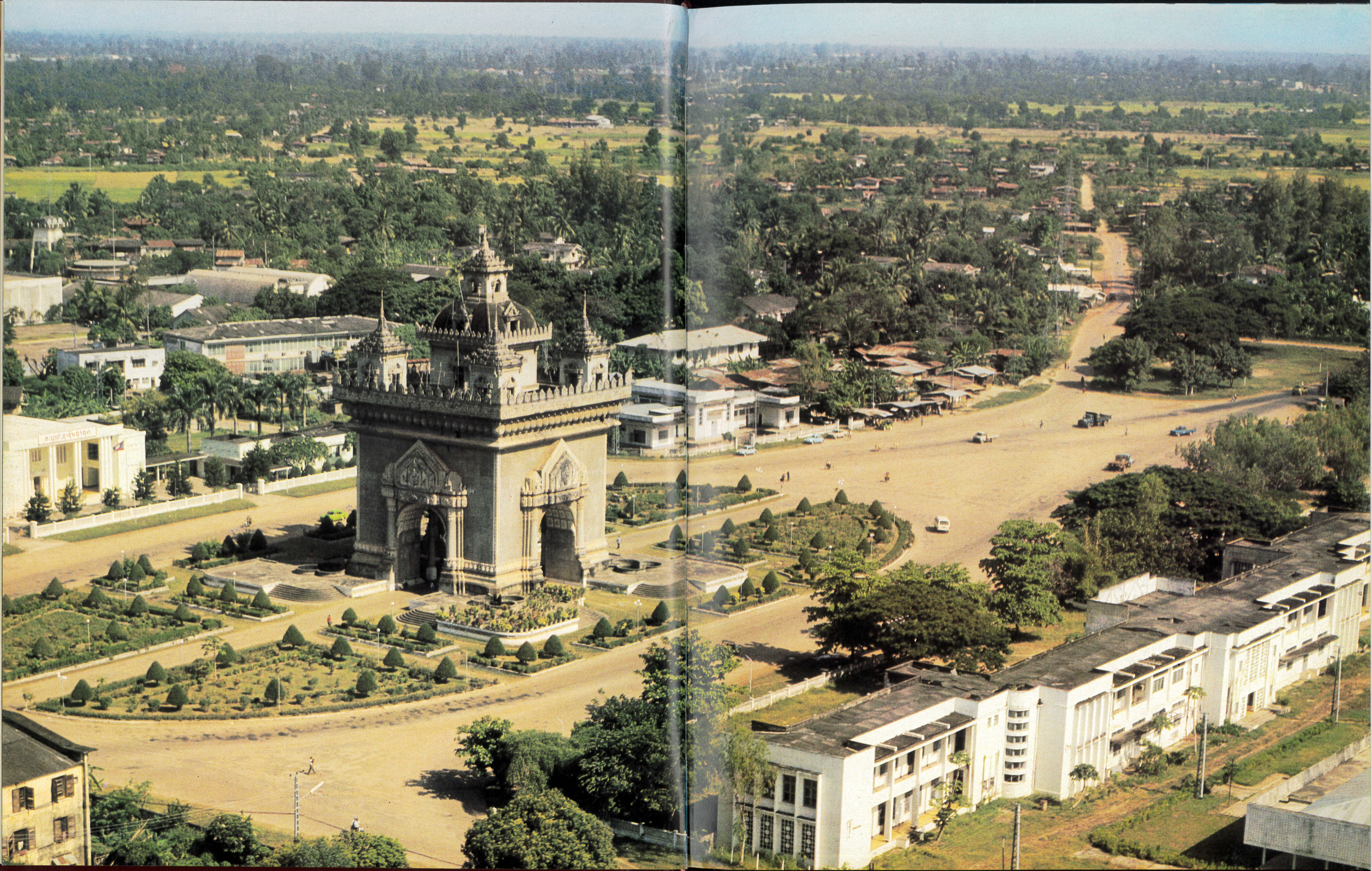

Lancangjiang (Mekong)
CHINA
sông Hông Hà
sông Da (Black)
BURMA
Phongsali
Luangnamtha
Khoua
Xai
Houayxay
Nam Ou
Xamnua
Xon
V I E T N A M
sông Ma
Luangphabang
Hongsa
Phônsavan
Xaignabouli
Xiangkhouang
Nam Ngum
Thathom
sông Ca
vinh Bac Bô (Gulf of Tongking)
Mae Nam Nan
Thong
Paklay
Phonhong
VIENTIANE
Pakxan
Pakkading
Napé
Nam Kading
Botèn
Thakhèk (Khammouan)
Nong Han
Donghén
Savannakhet
Xe Banghiang
Xépon
Nam Si
THAILAND
Salavan
Mae Nam Pasak
Mae Nam Mun
Pakxé
Pakxong
Attapu
Kao
Champasak
Xe Kong
Mekong
Nam Xan
KAMPUCHEA

The Lao nation and its every member have always cherished but one dream:
To unite their efforts, harden their will and become as one.
We shall go forward confidently, glorifying our land with our deeds.
We shall be masters in the country where all the peoples are equal.
We shall frustrate all schemes of imperialists and traitors.
All the Laotians shall do their best to build up their country's independence and freedom,
To work persistently to win and to guide the nation to prosperity.

The National Anthem
of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

What can be greater than my
dear land,
The land of blue-peaked
mountains, abundant rivers and
emerald-green fields?
Only my people who fought to
be forever
Masters of that fair land.

(From a Lao folk song)



3
СИБИРЯК
4
СИБИРЯК
PHOMPHO 5 SOMKHAN
СИБИРЯК

Kaysone Phomvihane, Secretary-General of the LPRP Central Committee, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the LPDR, meeting General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev. Moscow, 1985

HOW BEAUTIFUL YOU ARE, MY COUNTRY!

Laos is a mountainous country. Mountain ranges, highlands and plateaux occupy over 90 per cent of its territory.

The largest plateaux are concentrated in the country's north, in particular, on Xiangkhouang Plateau, its average height being 1,200 metres above sea level. Mount Bia (2,820 metres), the highest peak in Laos, is situated in its southern part.

Part of the plateau is known as the Plaine des Jarres (Valley of Pitchers): huge vessels shaped as pitchers and made of a single piece of rock each are scattered all over the place.

Scientists' opinions about the purpose of these vessels differ. Some of them, supported by a poetic local legend according to which the gods drank divine wine from the pitchers, think that the Valley of Pitchers used to be a huge wine cellar. Others believe that the vessels were used to store rice, when the place was besieged by enemies. Still others think that the vessels held the remains of tribal chieftains. These authentic historical objects are valuable assets not only of Laotian culture but of the world civilization as well.

There are no mountains in the country's central part. The fertile Vientiane Valley spreads from the mountain foothills to the Mekong. Its southern part lies on vast plateaux, the largest of them being Khammouan Plateau, famed for its picturesque grottoes and gorges. To the south the plateau gradually becomes a hilly plain, the Savannakhet Valley, which is the main rice-growing area of Laos. It adjoins the Champasak Plain irrigated by the Mekong and its tributaries.

The Plateau des Bolovens lies in the centre of South Laos, its area being over 10,000 square kilometres. It is one of the most fertile regions in the country where high-yield varieties of rice, coffee, tea, pepper and other cultures are grown.

Laos lies in a monsoon zone. Its year has two seasons: the hot and humid one, from May to October, and the cool and dry one, from November to April. The seasonal change is caused by monsoons.

The Mekong is the country's biggest river. Its length on the country's territory is 1,850 kilometres. In the north the Mekong makes its way through mountain gorges. Skirting steep rocks and overcoming rapids, it labours towards Luangphabang. From there to the country's capital, Vientiane, the serene current of the Mekong is broken by numerous rapids and shoals. The Mekong is navigable all year round for nearly 500 kilometres to the south of Vientiane. At Savannakhet it is 1,500 metres wide. To the south of it lie big rapids. There the deep Mekong breaks into several branches separated by rocky islands. Leaving the rapids behind, the Mekong flows wide again, its current slow up to the Kampuchean border where its way is blocked by rocks near Khong Island. Huge waterfalls tumbling down from heights of up to 15 metres divide again into several branches, skirting little islands overgrown with thick tropical forest. It is one of the most beautiful sights in Laos.

Laos was once known as "The Country of a Million Elephants". The number of elephants was the nation's wealth and power.

From time immemorial, herds of elephants lived in the humid tropical forests of southern Laos. Some of them were albino animals. Their colour was light grey tinged with pink. Lao people believed them to be sacred animals with miraculous powers.

Elephants were used in the Royal Army. Great numbers of the animals worked at timberworks and in agriculture. One can still see elephants working in some parts of Laos. A wild variety also lives in Laos, mainly in the southern part of the country. According to a rough estimate, there are no more than 900 of them left in the region.

Tigers and leopards still roam the impassable woods in the country's south, as well as moor lynxes and marble panthers, that inhabit river valleys and mountain gorges. Himalayan and Malayan bears live in the mountain woods of northern Laos. All kinds of monkeys and parrots can be seen in the forests.

Laotian rivers are rich in fish, especially carp. Some fish can live both in water and on dry land. In the dry season they hide away in the silt covering the bottom of shallow or dry ponds and rivers. Fish is traditional Laotian food.

Laos is a country with an ancient culture.

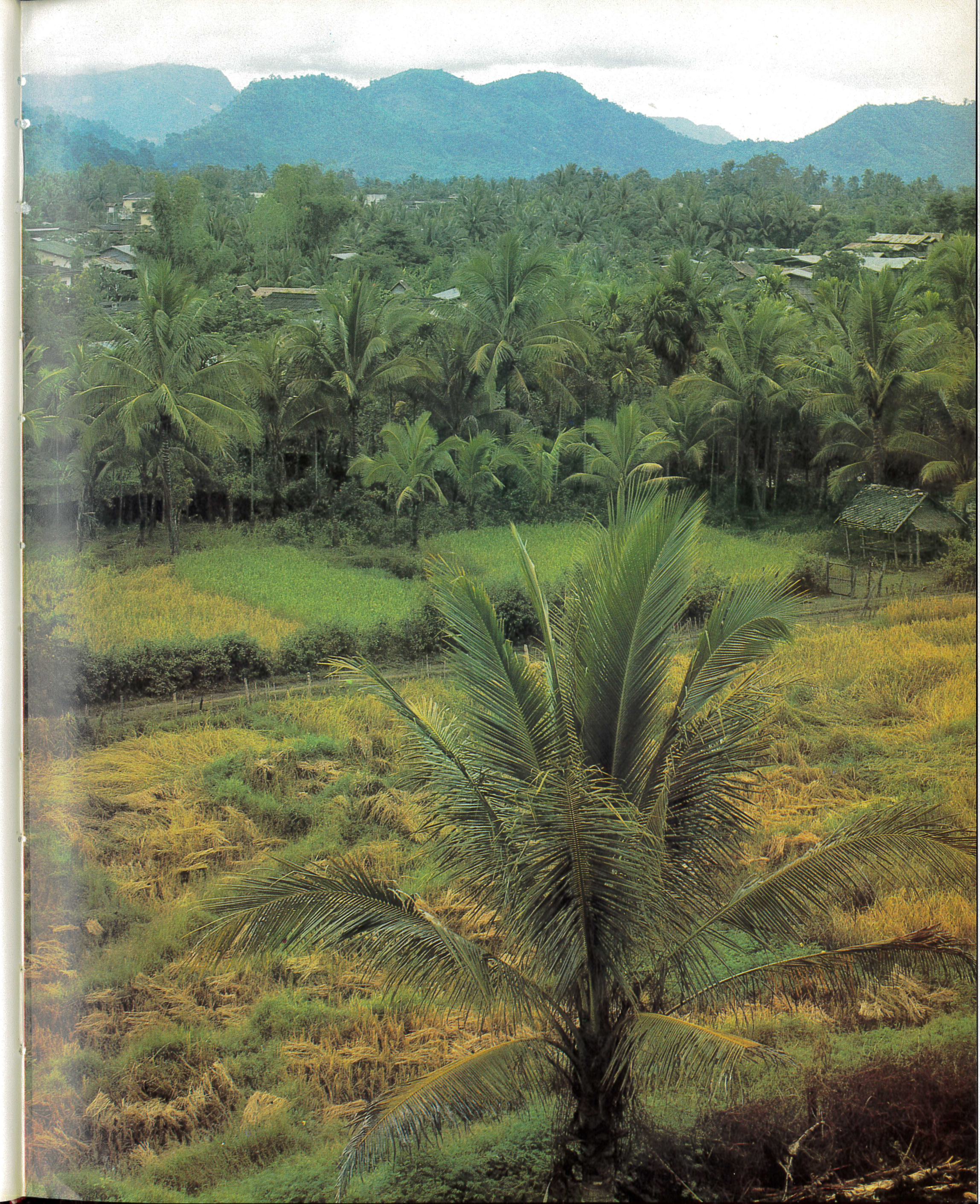
The historic sights of Vientiane and Luangphabang are known well beyond the Laotian borders. Built many centuries ago, they are still magnificent.

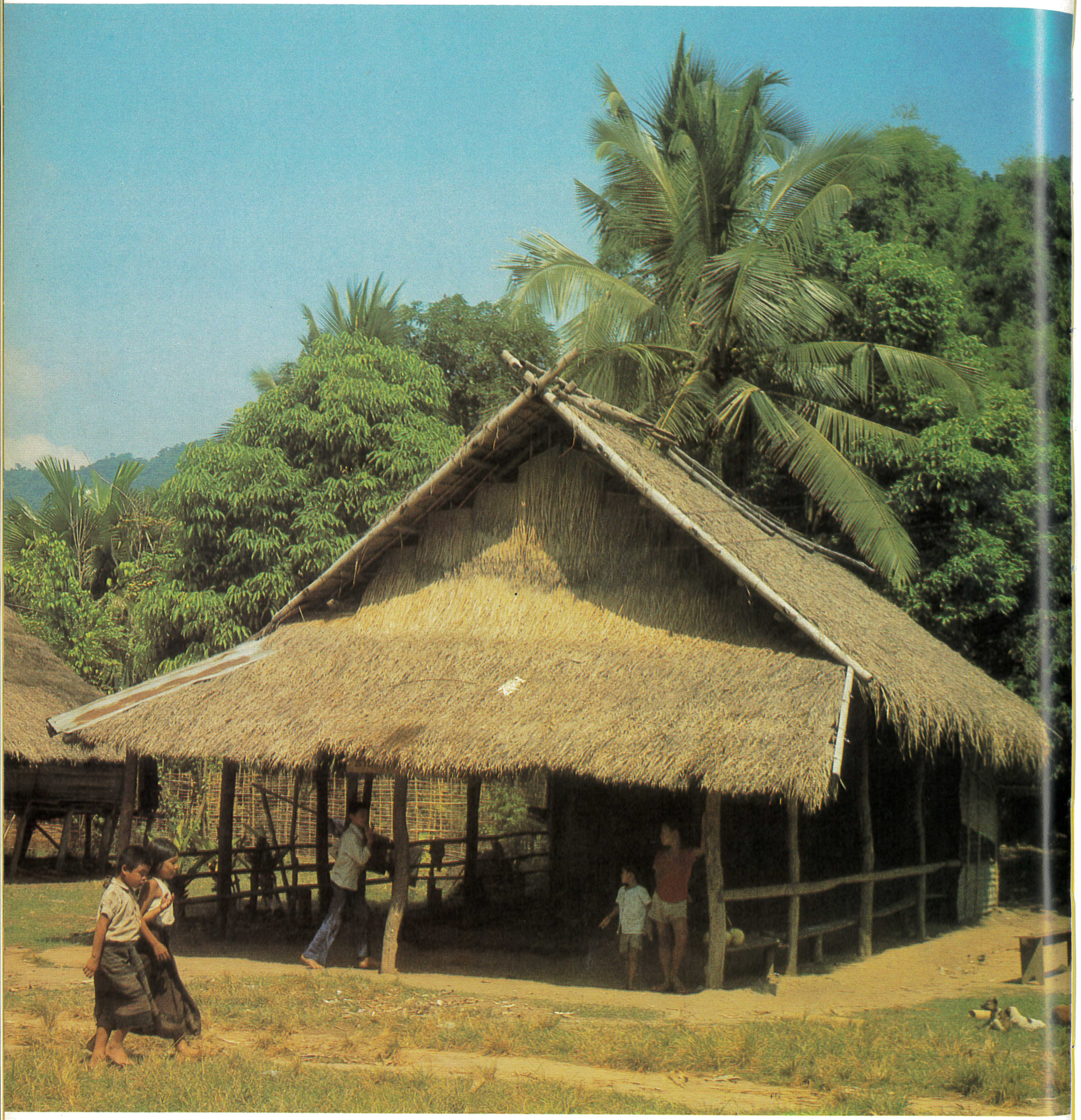
Vientiane, founded in the 13th century, was the capital of the kingdom of Lan Xang ("Million elephants") for a century and a half. In the 16th century, the shrine of That Luang (King's Stupa) and Vat Pha Keo (the Emerald Buddha's Pagoda, which used to have a jade statue of Buddha) were built there. Both the temples are wonderful specimens of Laotian architecture. That Luang, a real masterpiece of the national style, is made up of pointed stone stupas of different shapes and sizes (such stupas are called "That" in Laos) forming two rows. In its centre there is a stone stupa over 30 metres high.

The cities of Vientiane and Luangphabang used to be the major cultural centres in the Lan Xang period. The latter was named after a gold statue of a standing Buddha ("phabang" means "gold Buddha", and "Luang" is "royal"). At present, the statue is displayed at the museum in the former royal residence. Other temples, Vat Mai (18th century), Vat Sieng Thong (16th century) and That Makmo (the Water-Melon Pagoda, 16th century) in Luangphabang are magnificent specimens of wooden architecture. They are decorated with the subtlest gilded patterns and unique woodwork on the walls and roofs.

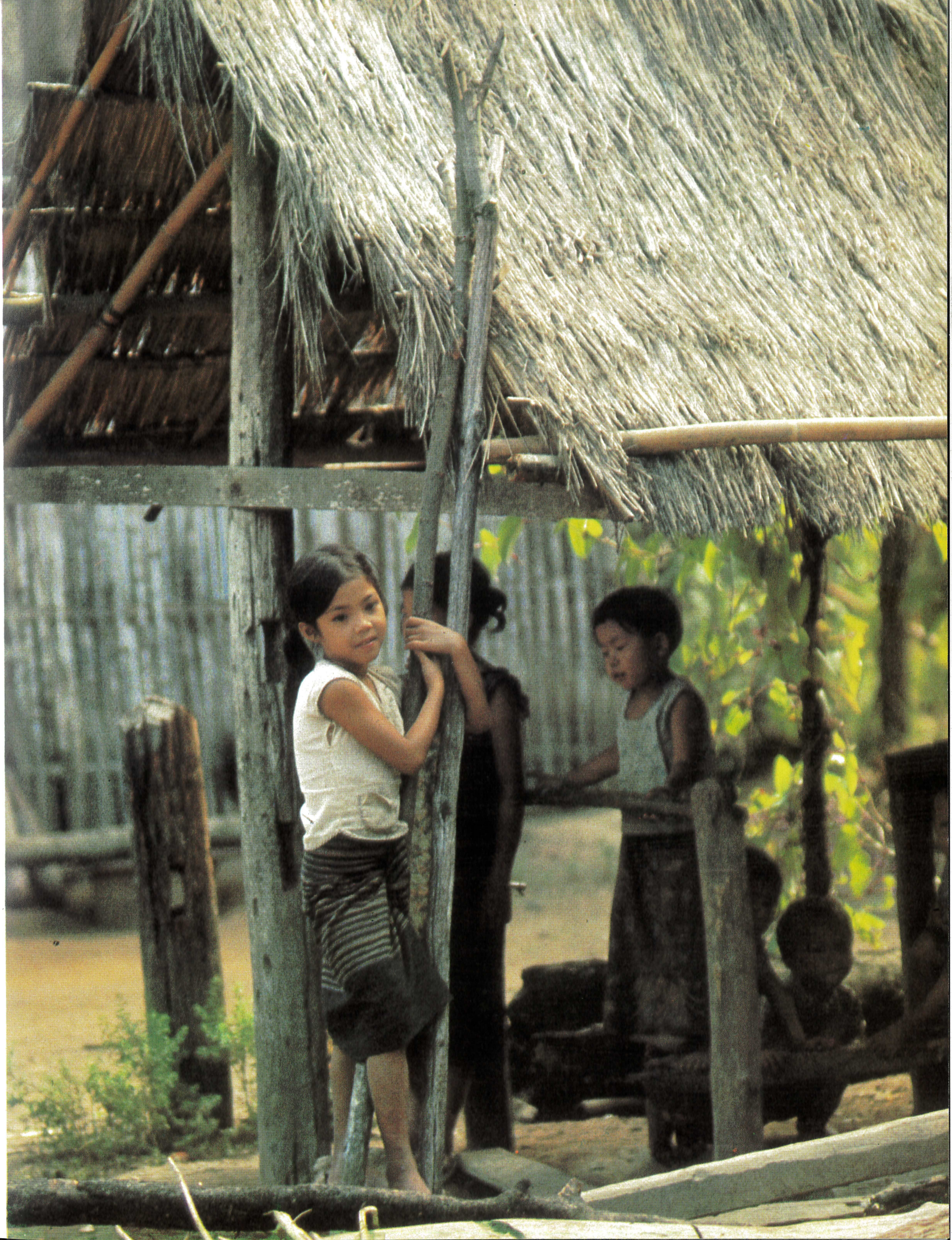
The state takes great care of the Laotian cultural monuments. The Lao people cherish their folk art traditions, passing them from one generation to the next and developing them further.

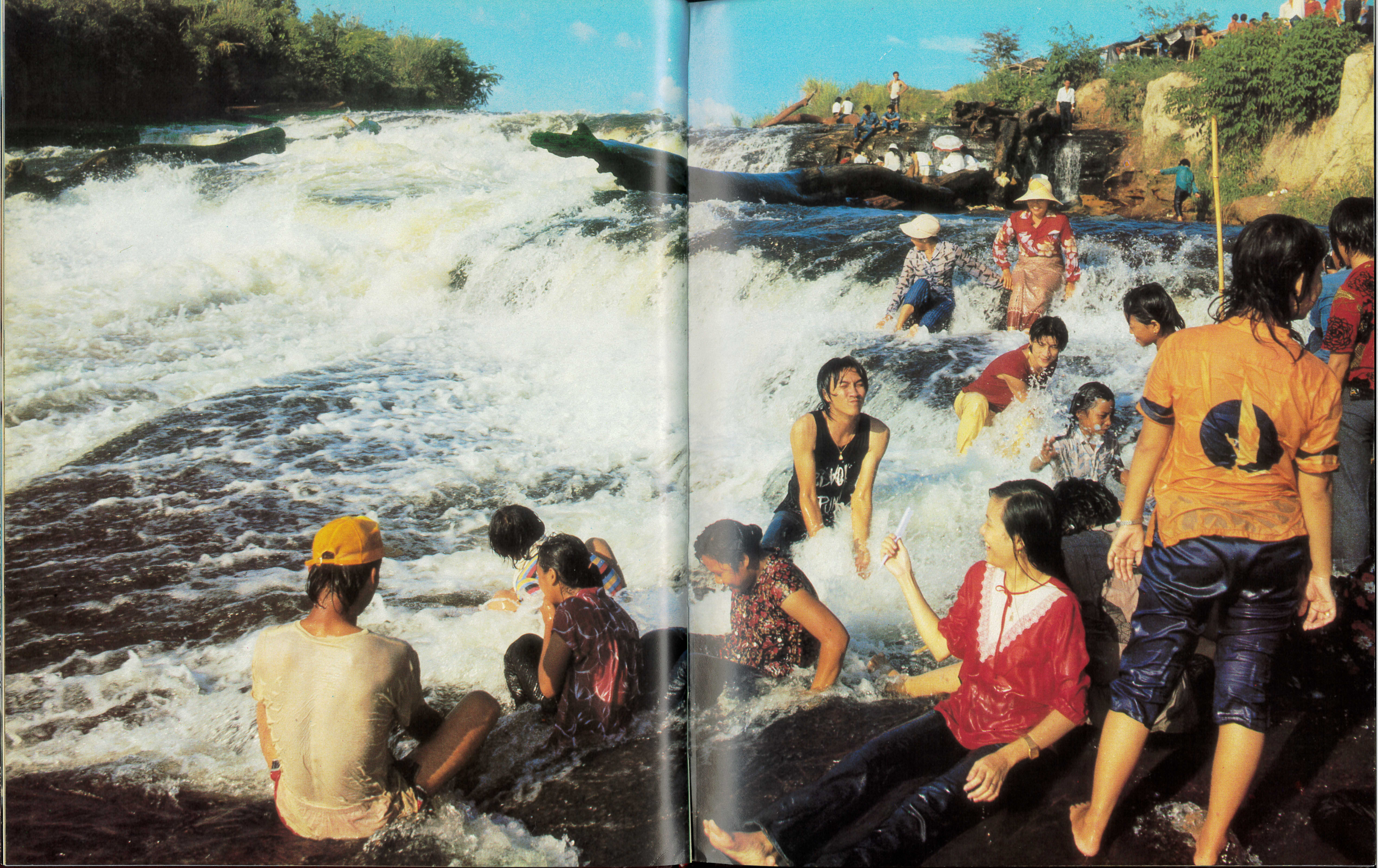
Green tropical forests, misty blue mountains and red rivers are typical of the Laotian landscape.

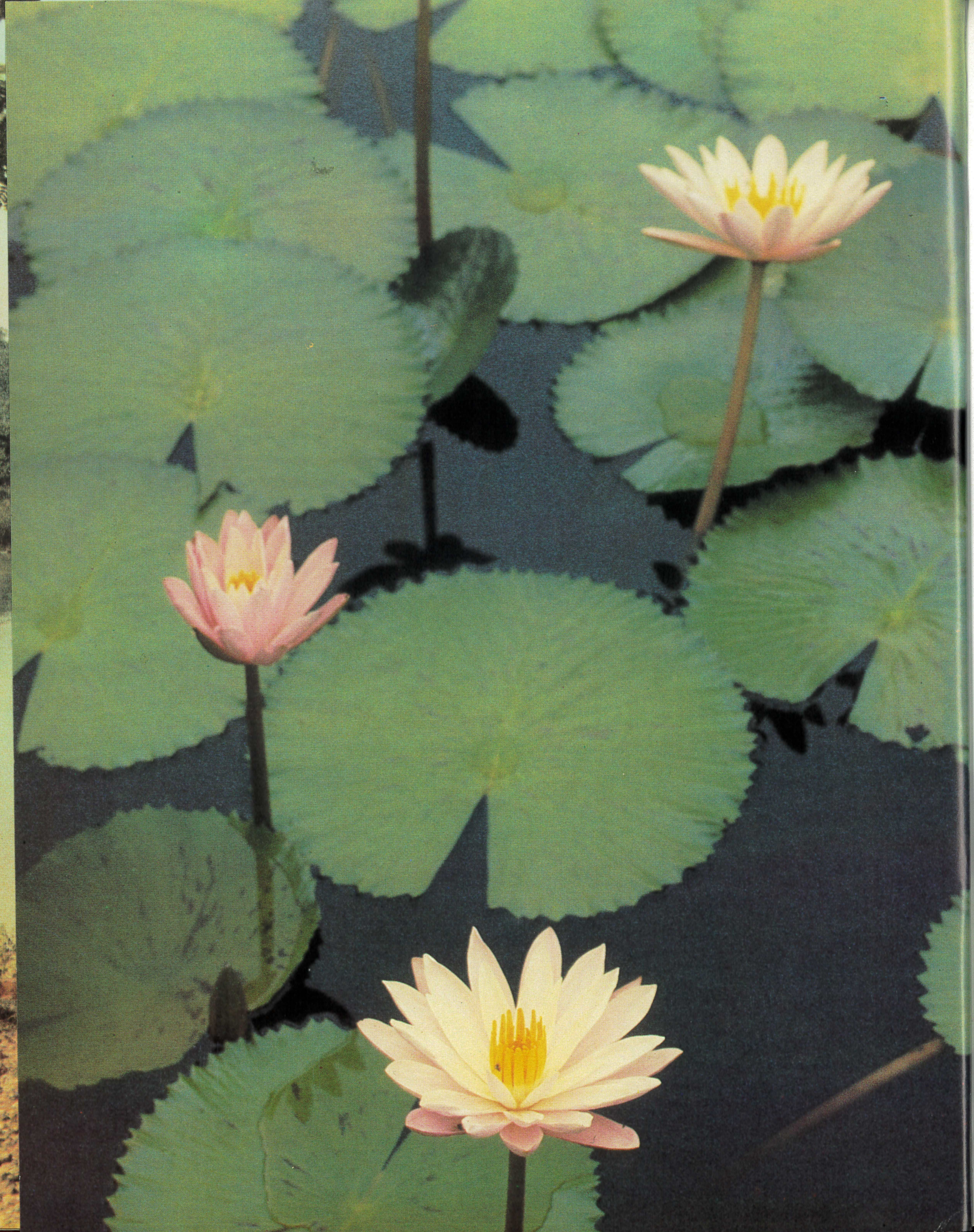




A house on piles is a typical peasant dwelling in Laos. The reed roof provides a good protection against the hot sun. Even the slightest breeze brings coolness to such a house.







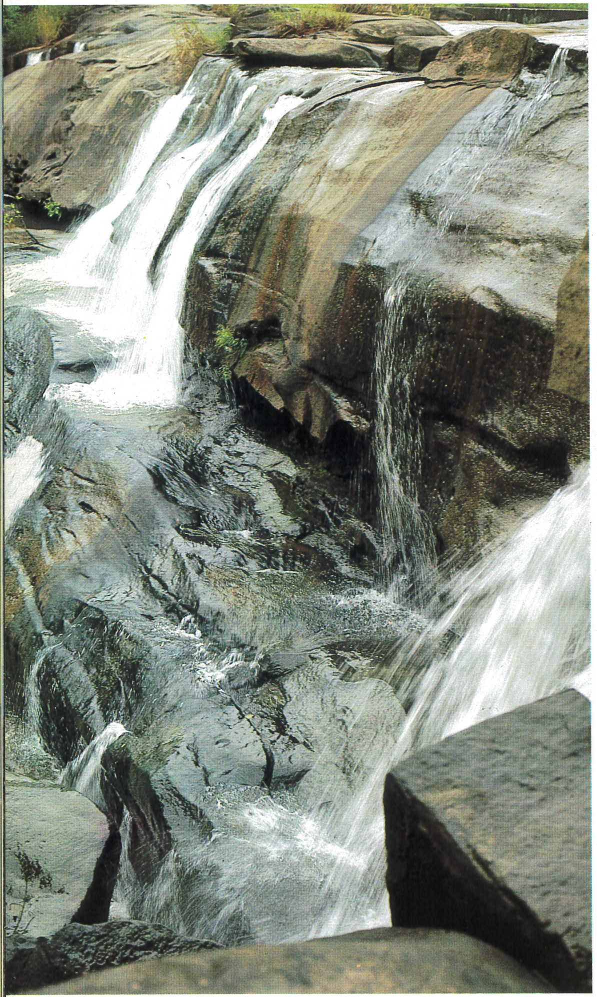
The exquisite beauty of the lotus flower can be compared only to the charm of a Laotian girl.

Flowers and trees, rice plantations and mountains... When they grow up, these Laotian children will call all that their homeland.

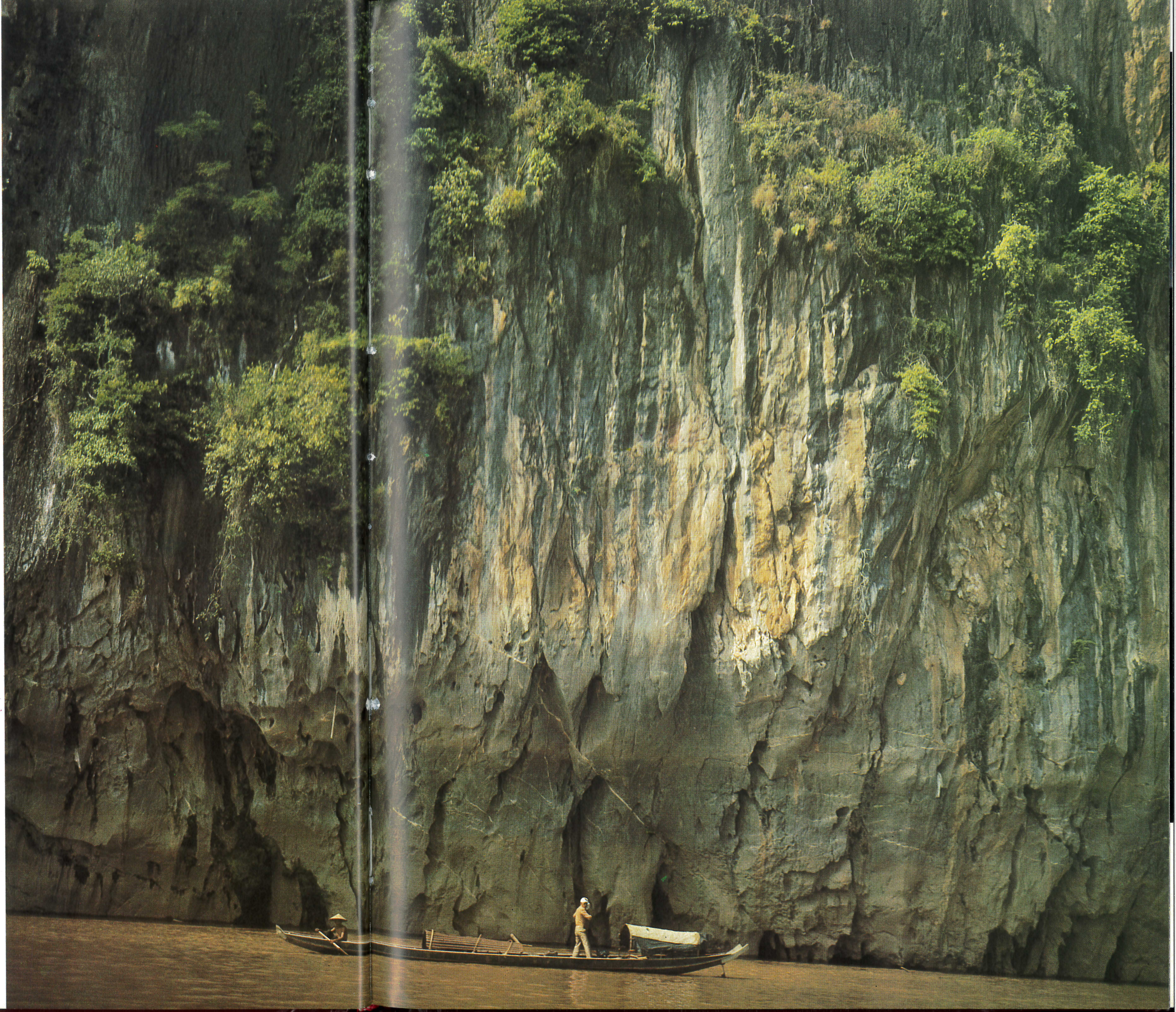
A village in southern Laos.

A view of the Plateau des Bolovens, one of the most bountiful regions in the country.

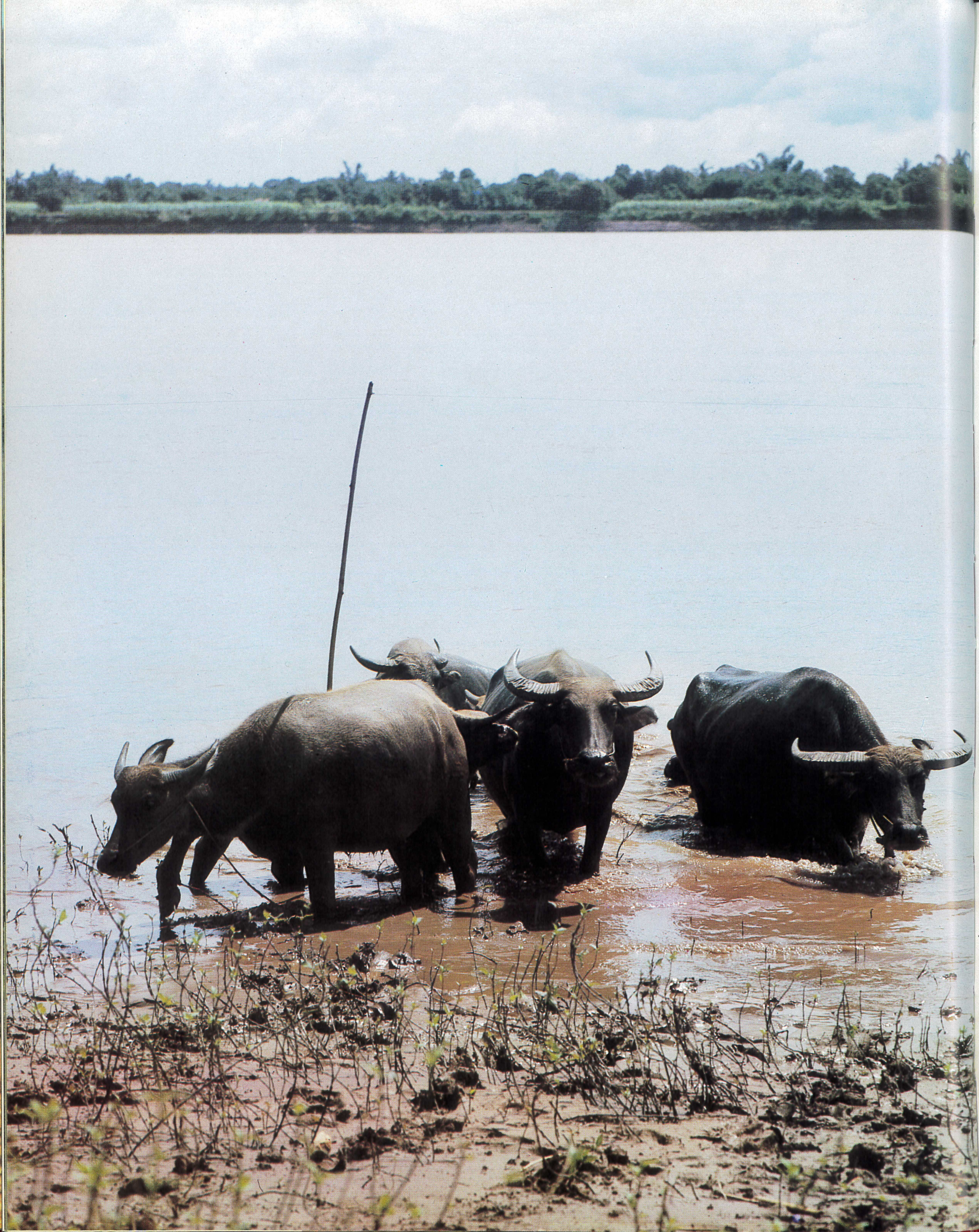
A southern girl in traditional folk costume.

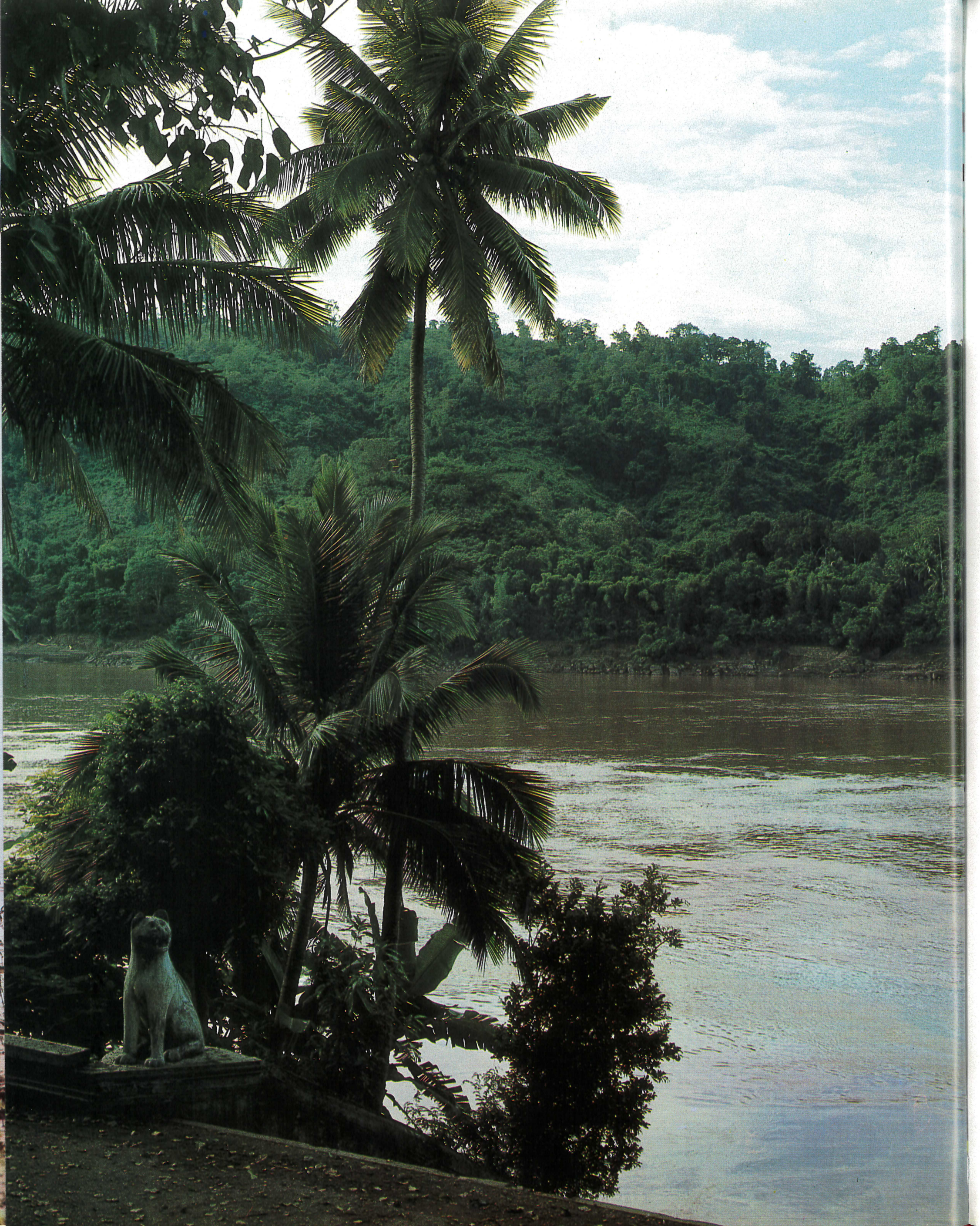


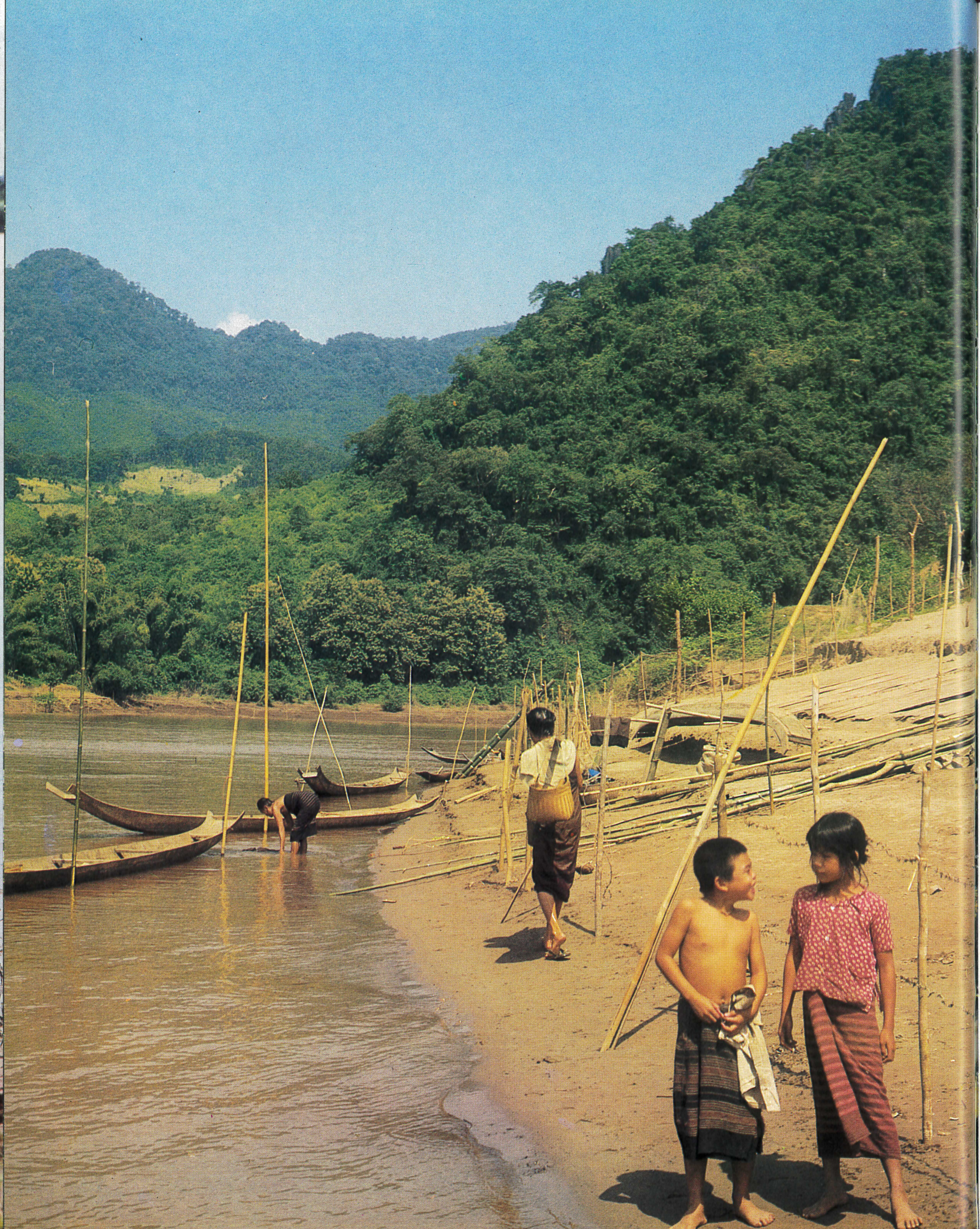
The Mekong River is
1,850 kilometres long on Laotian
territory. In the places where it
is blocked by mountains, the great
river fights its way through
canyons, rapids and shoals.



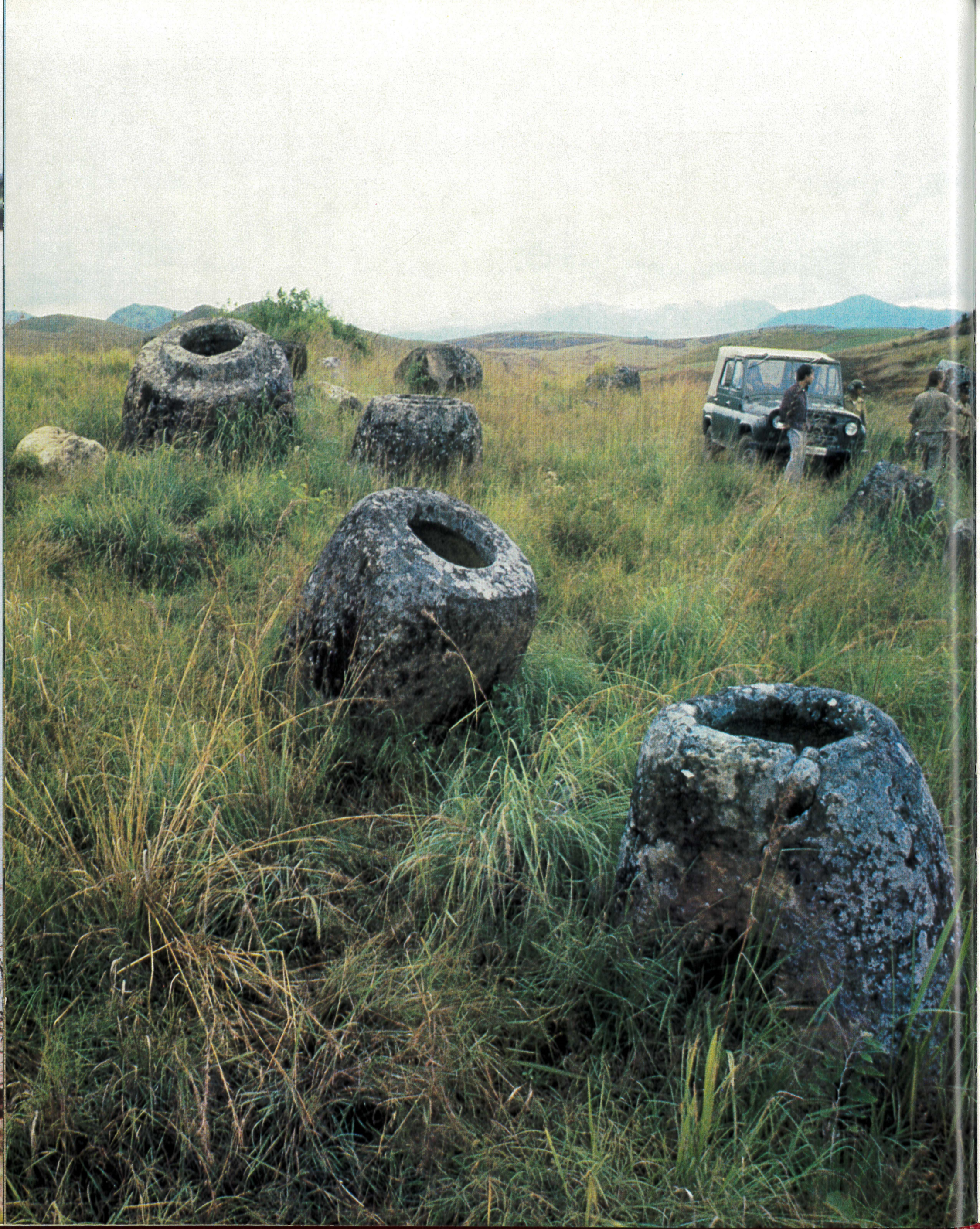
The serpentine current of the Mekong seems as endless as a thread in the hands of an embroideress.

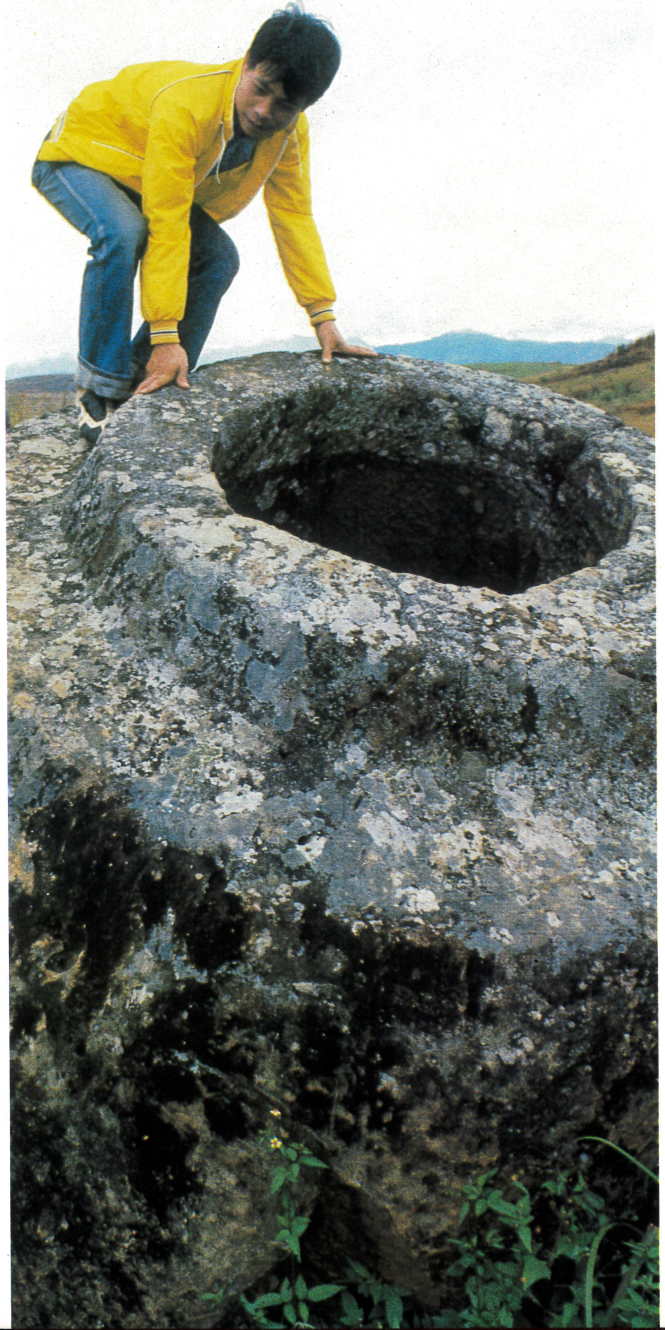






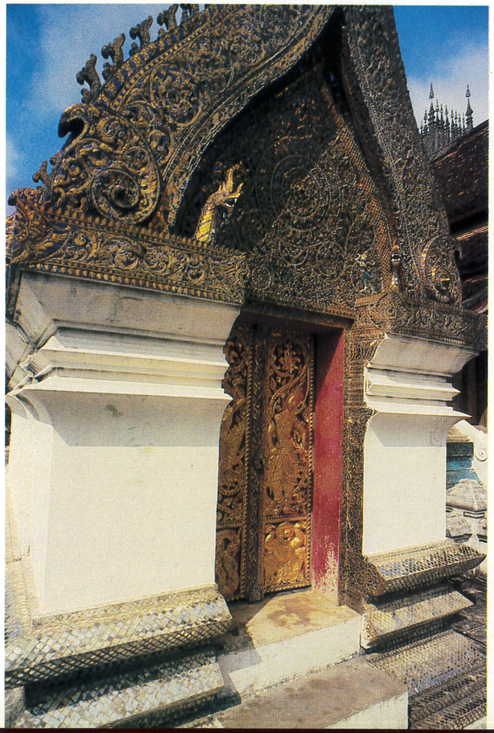
The Mekong is often referred to as "the Laotian beauty".

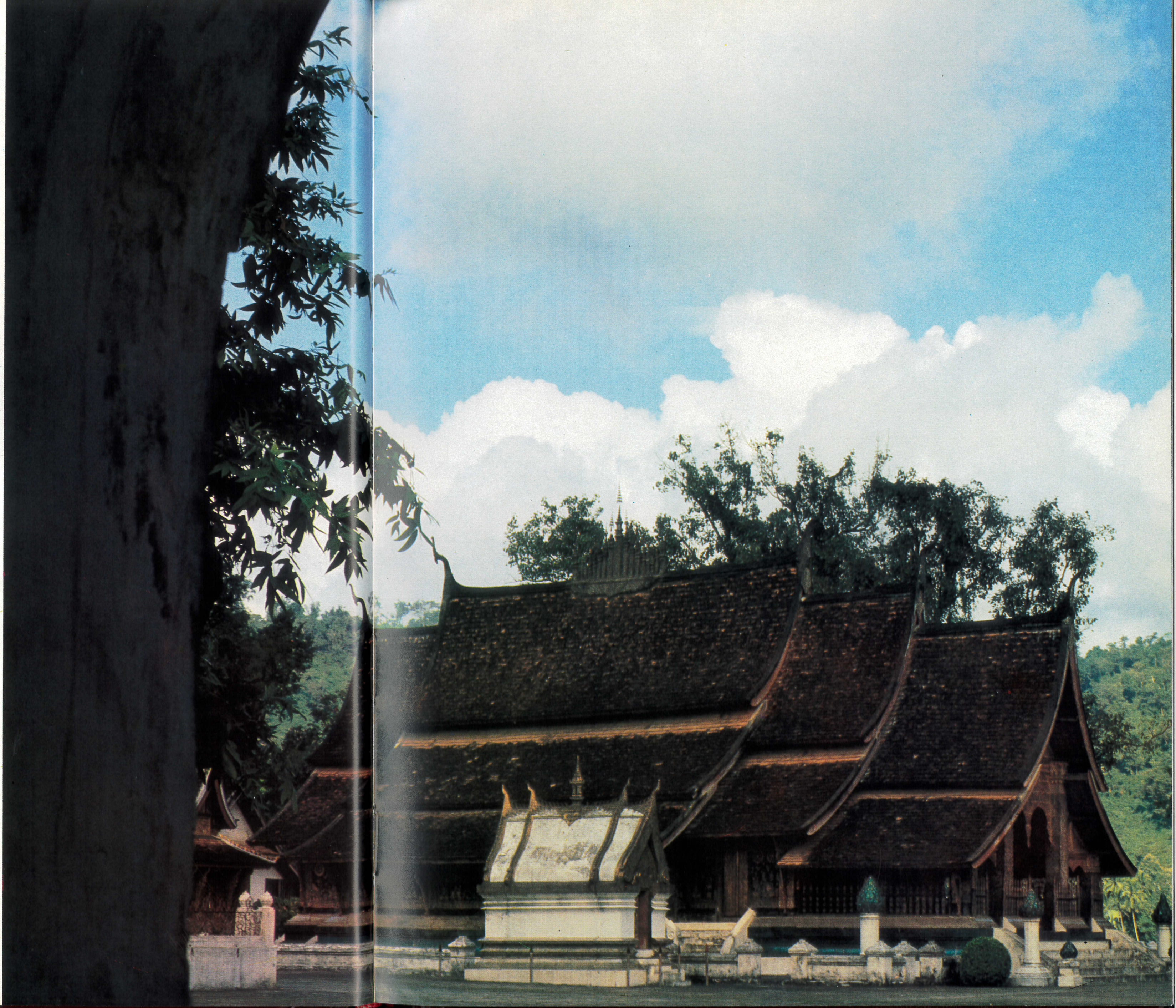


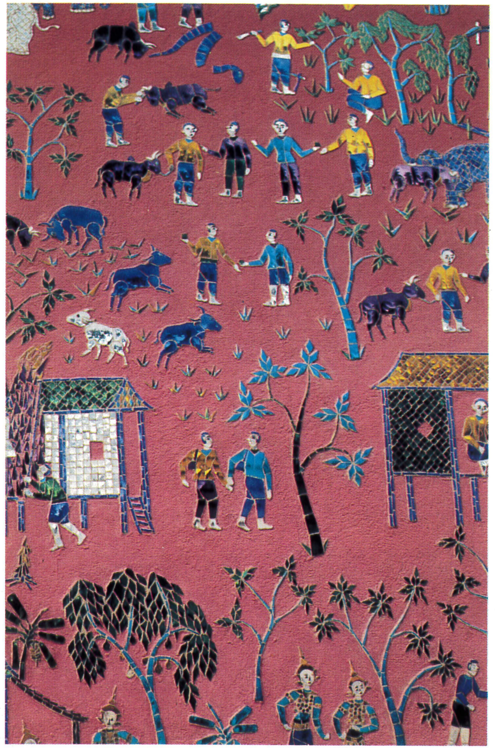


The legendary Valley of Pitchers is a mystery to historians. They still dispute the purpose of those stone pitchers.

Overleaf. Famous monuments of the ancient Luangphabang culture. Vat Sieng Thong, 16th century.



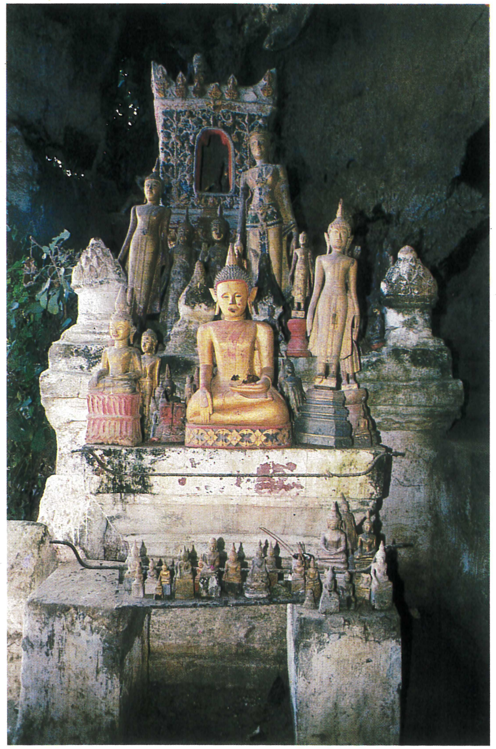


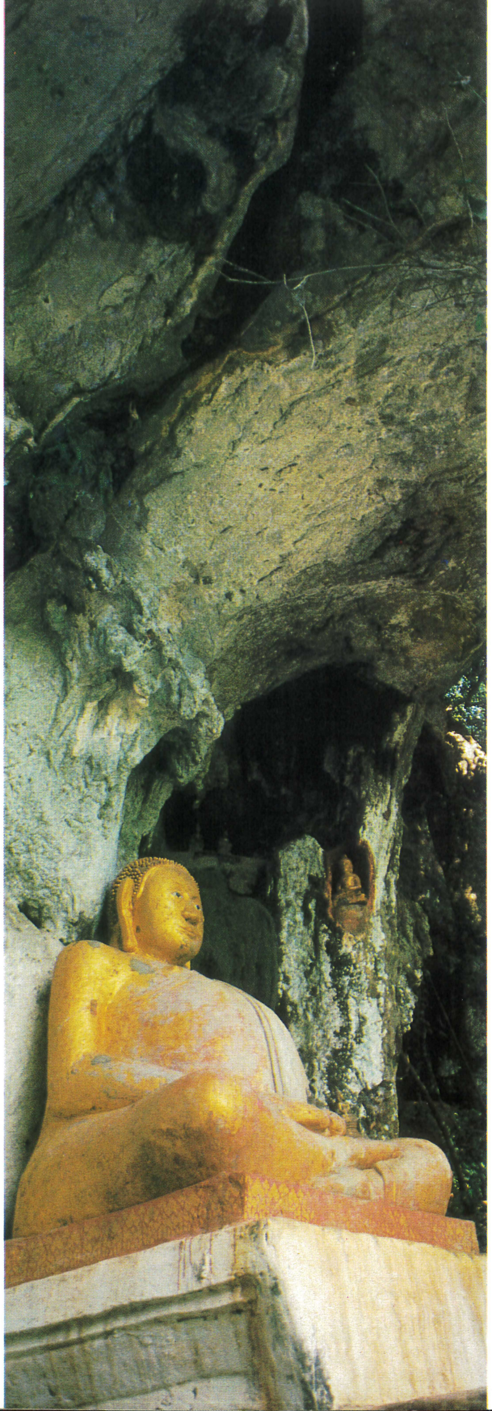


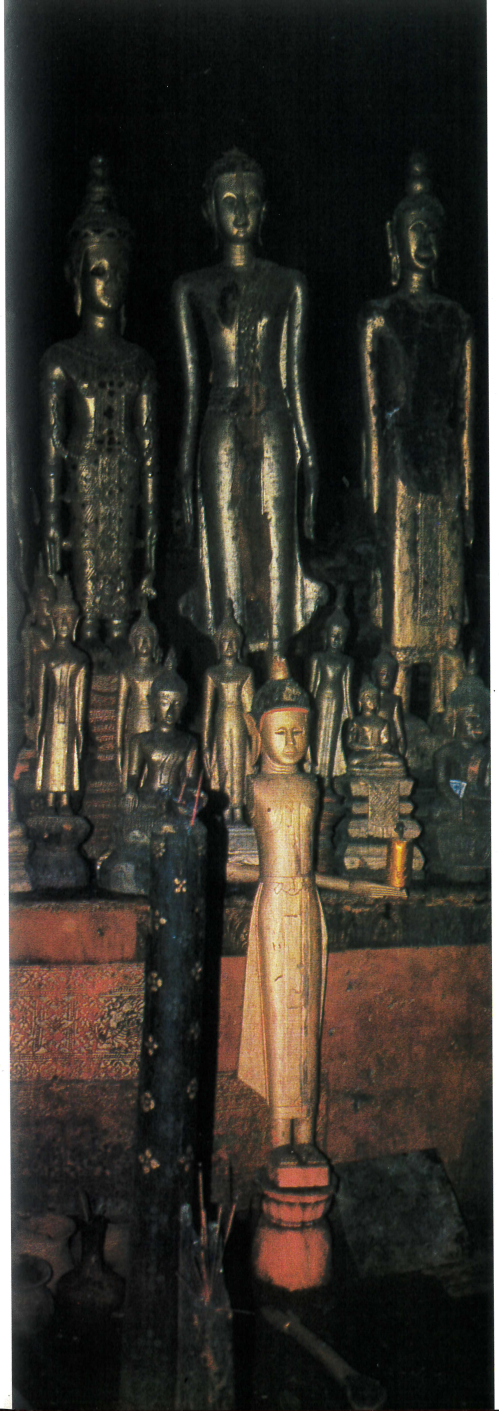
A mural mosaic made of different stones and illustrating folk legends. Vat Sieng Thong. Luangphabang.

A repository of ancient Buddhist manuscripts at Vat Sieng Thong.

Folk handicrafts from the grottoes near Luangphabang. People used to leave figurines of the Buddha, incense bowls and joss sticks in the grottoes.

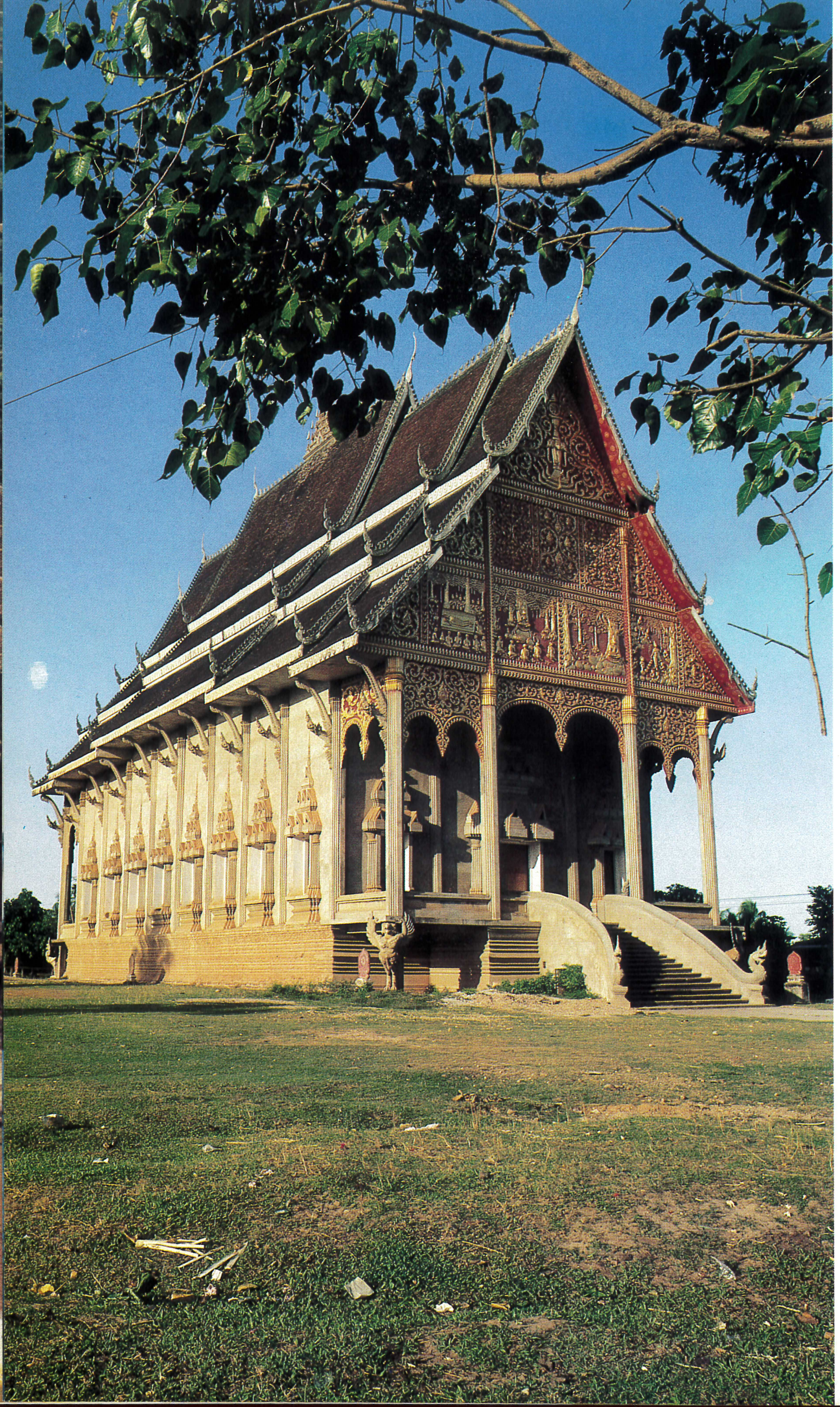




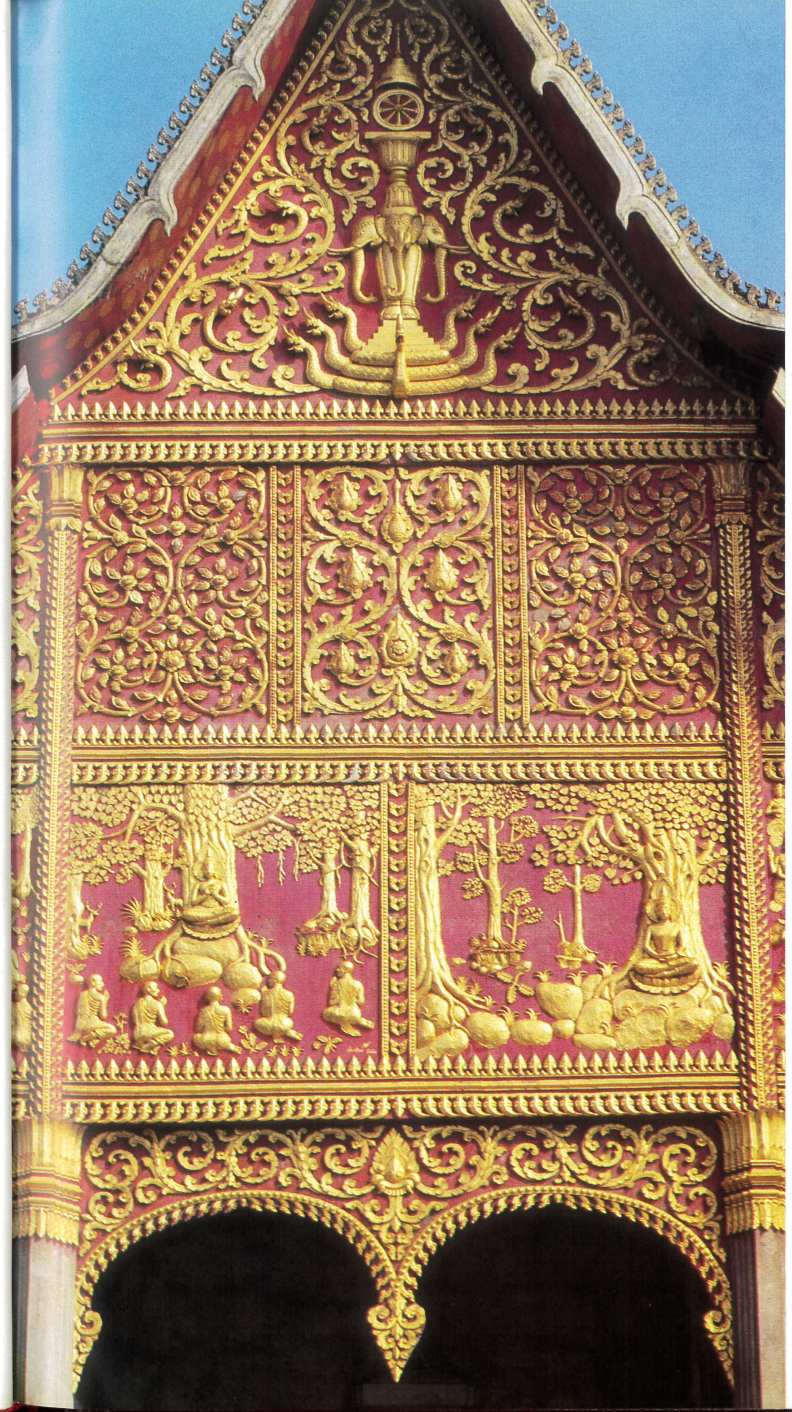


An image of Buddha left in any house, village or town seized by the enemy is considered desecrated.

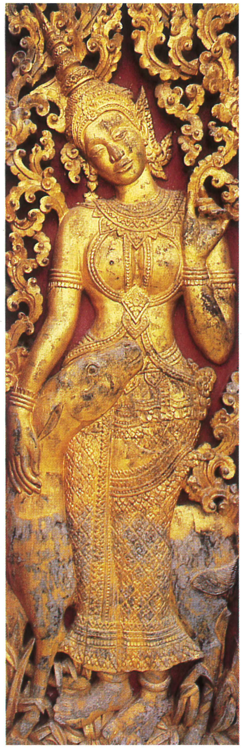
Overleaf. The Lao people's national treasure, the shrine of That Luang in the centre of Vientiane. 16th century.

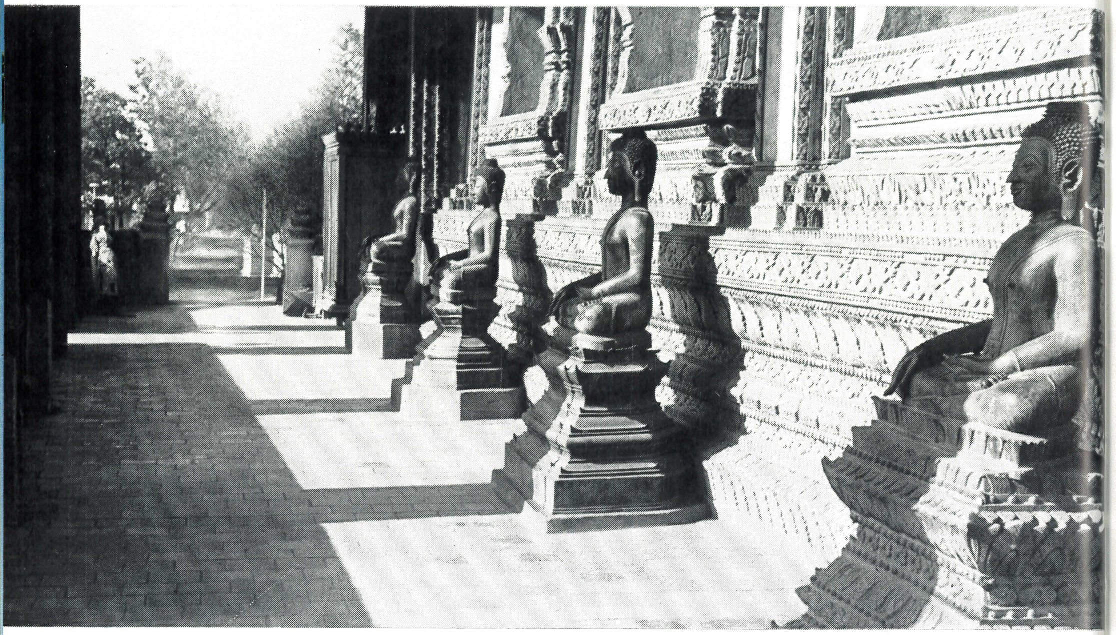


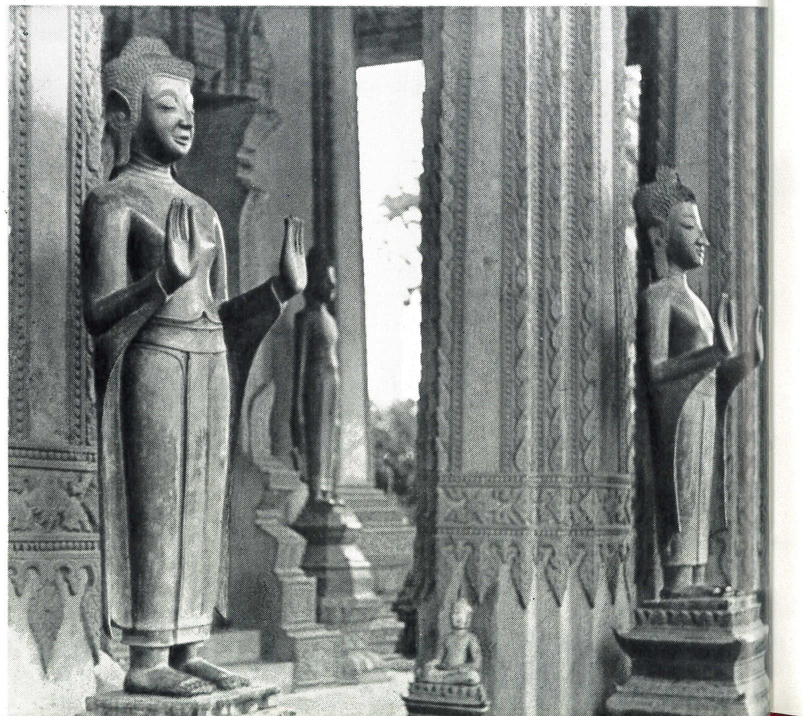
The temple of Vat That Luang.
Vientiane.



A carving on the outer wall.

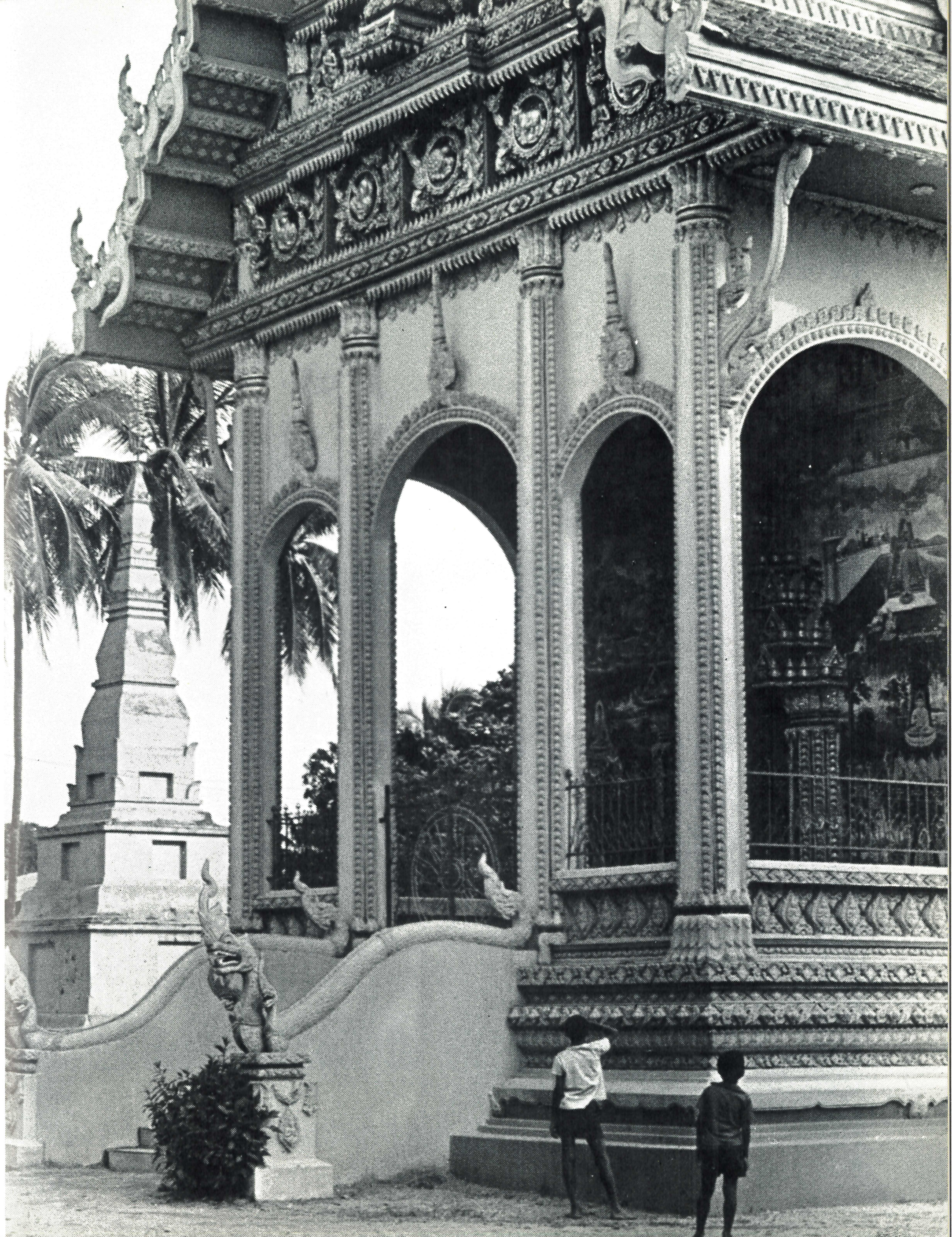


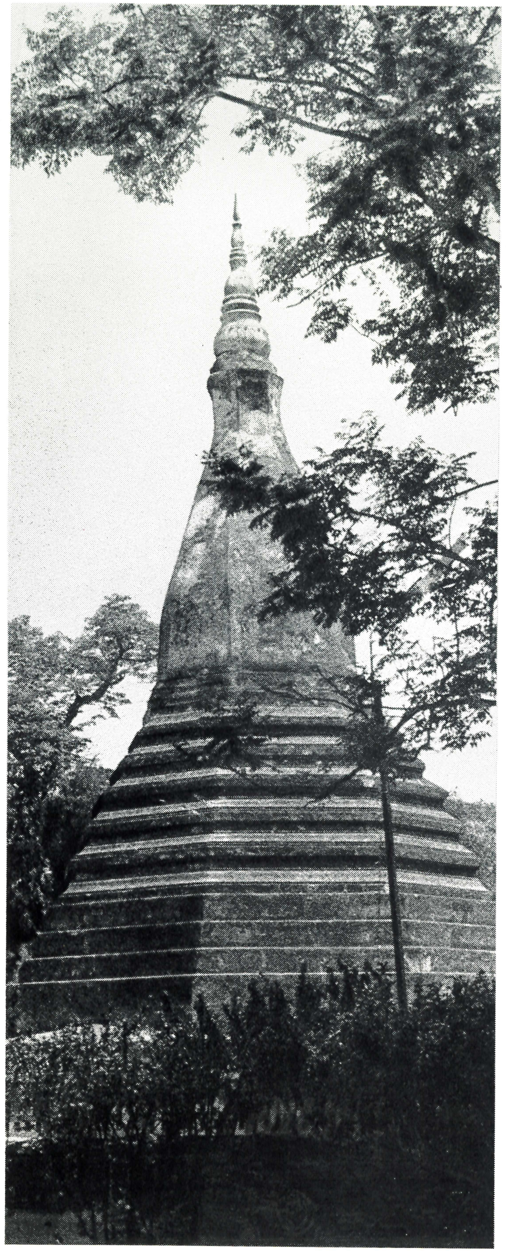


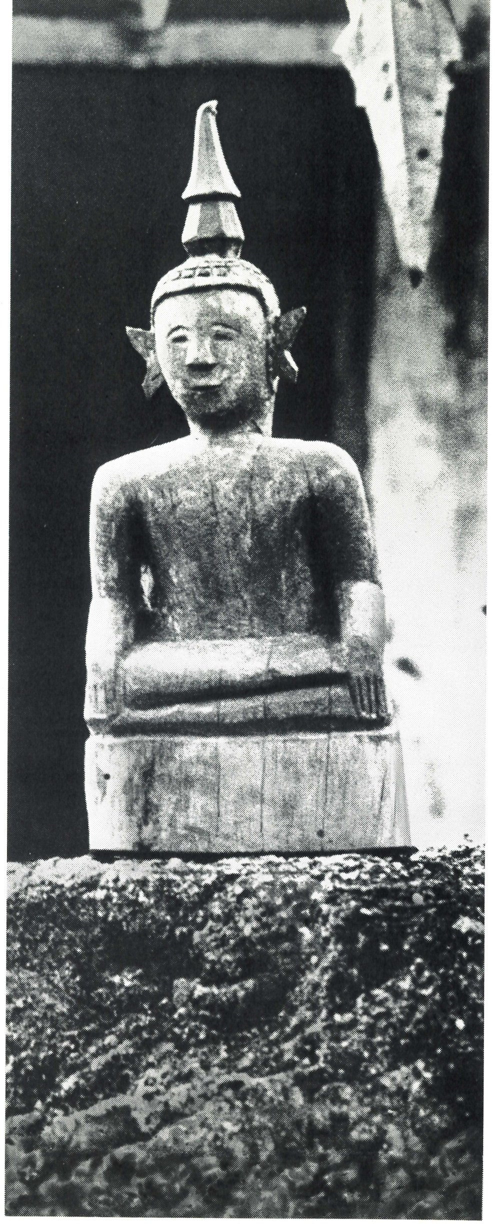


Stone sculptures round Vat Pha Keo (the Emerald Buddha's Pagoda) in Vientiane, now a national museum. According to a legend, it was built in 814 A.D.

The temple of Vat Tai Neai, Vientiane.

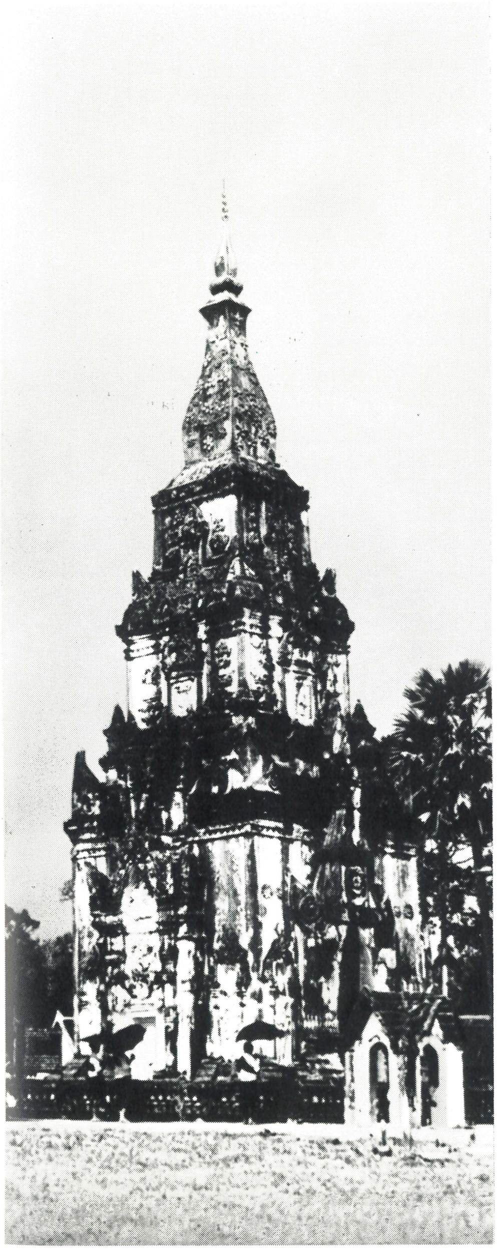


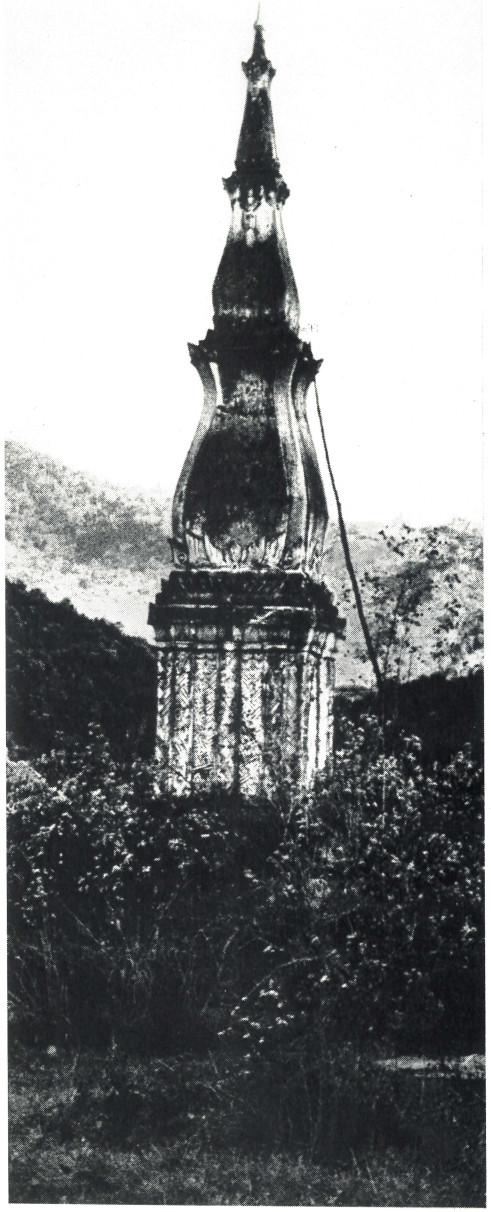




One of the most ancient stupas in Laos is That Dame.

A wooden Buddha





That Ing Rang. Savannakhet Province. Its foundation is 9 metres wide. The whole building is 25 metres high.

That Sikhotabong. Khammouan Province.

FOR FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE

The Lao people began fighting for independence many centuries ago. In different historical periods, Laotians had to take arms to defend their freedom against foreign invaders. In the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries, Laos was attacked by more powerful neighbours who claimed part of its territory. Late in the 19th century French colonialists based in Vietnam declared Laos "a zone of French influence" under the pretext of defending themselves from the attacks of the Black Flags (Chinese armed units). In May 1893 French troops invaded Laos. The colonial authorities in the country set up a regime of fierce exploitation and oppression, but nothing could suppress the people's aspirations for freedom. The turn of this century was marked by mass anti-colonial actions. Peasants of the three southern provinces of Laos, driven to despair by forced labour and heavy taxes, rebelled in 1901. Nine years later nearly the entire Plateau des Bolovens in southern Laos was swept by a peasant uprising led by Ong Keo and Ong Kommodame. For over 25 years the peasants fought against the colonialists who used cruel reprisals against the rebels. These and many other national uprisings promoted the consolidation of the national forces fighting against colonialism.

The Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia (1917) had a tremendous effect on the development of revolutionary movements in Indochina in general and in Laos in particular. The newly-emerged working class of the country joined the anticolonialist struggle. In the early 30s, led by the Communist Party of Indochina, a wave of workers' strikes and demonstrations swept Laos.

In 1945, making use of the favourable situation that developed after the Soviet Army defeated Nazi Germany and militarist Japan and after the victory of the August Revolution in Vietnam, the Lao people seized power from the Japanese aggressors and the French colonialists and proclaimed their country's independence.

Early in 1946, however, French troops invaded Laos again. The Resistance War began. One of the leaders of the Lao people's struggle for independence was Comrade Kaysone Phomvihane. In 1947 he led the independence movement in the north-east of the country. The armed units he had organized became the main force of the Lao People's Liberation Army, formed in 1949.

The First Congress of the Lao People's Party took place in the centre of the Lao revolutionary movement, the city of Xamnua (Houaphan Province in the north of Laos), on March 22, 1955. The congress elected Kaysone Phomvihane Secretary-General of the Party's Central Committee, and he has been its leader for 30 years now.

The Party, supported by the fraternal nations of Indochina and backed by the socialist community, guided the Lao people to a national democratic revolution.

The Lao Patriotic Front (LPF) was set up under the Party's guidance in 1956. Prince Souphanouvong, a distinguished figure of the country's national-liberation movement, was elected Chairman of the LPF Central Committee. By that time the national revolutionary forces had achieved outstanding success. A great part of the country's territory, populated by over one million people, had been liberated.

Despite the enormous inner political difficulties and endless imperialist interference in the home affairs of Laos the patriots' determined efforts resulted in a major victory: on June 24, 1962, a tripartite government of national unity was formed in Laos, made up by representatives of the Patriotic Front, the neutralists and the right-wing forces.

In July 1962, a declaration on Laos's neutrality and a protocol supplementing the declaration and envisaging the withdrawal of foreign troops and military personnel from Laos were adopted by an international conference in Geneva. The Geneva agreements on Laos created prerequisites for the country's advance along the road of independence and peace. However, the USA, backed by the right-wing forces, set out to frustrate them and unleash a civil war in Laos.

In May 1964, the United States started a direct aggression against the Lao people. During the war years, US aircraft dropped over three million tons of explosives on Laotian territory. The hostilities against Laos were waged by the right-wing Vientiane grouping supported by Thai mercenary detachments and the armed forces of the Saigon regime equipped with American weapons.

The Lao People's Liberation Army was determined to defeat the aggressors. The battles in the Valley of Pitchers, and on Road No. 9, as well as other military operations resulting in the enemy's final defeat, have gone down in history as the Lao patriots' glorious victories.

Despite US bombings and war-time difficulties, the population of the liberated regions led by the Party and LPF was involved in successful economic and cultural construction. Agricultural areas were increased, rice production grew, industrial enterprises, workshops and schools accommodated in mountain caves continued functioning.

In February 1972, the Second Congress of the Party was held, at which it was re-named the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP). Comrade Kaysone Phomvihane was again elected Secretary-General of the Party's Central Committee. One of the major documents of the congress put forward the task of transferring the country to socialism, by-passing the capitalist stage.

All patriotic forces of Laos combined efforts to fight the internal and foreign reactionaries. Their purpose was to put an end to the hostilities and turn Laos into a peaceful, neutral, and truly independent state. Their efforts were backed by all progressive forces of the world. The patriots' long struggle against the local reactionaries and their American patrons ended in February 1973, when an agreement on peace and national accord in Laos was signed.

In 1975, when a revolutionary situation developed, the LPRP used it to take power in a peaceful way.

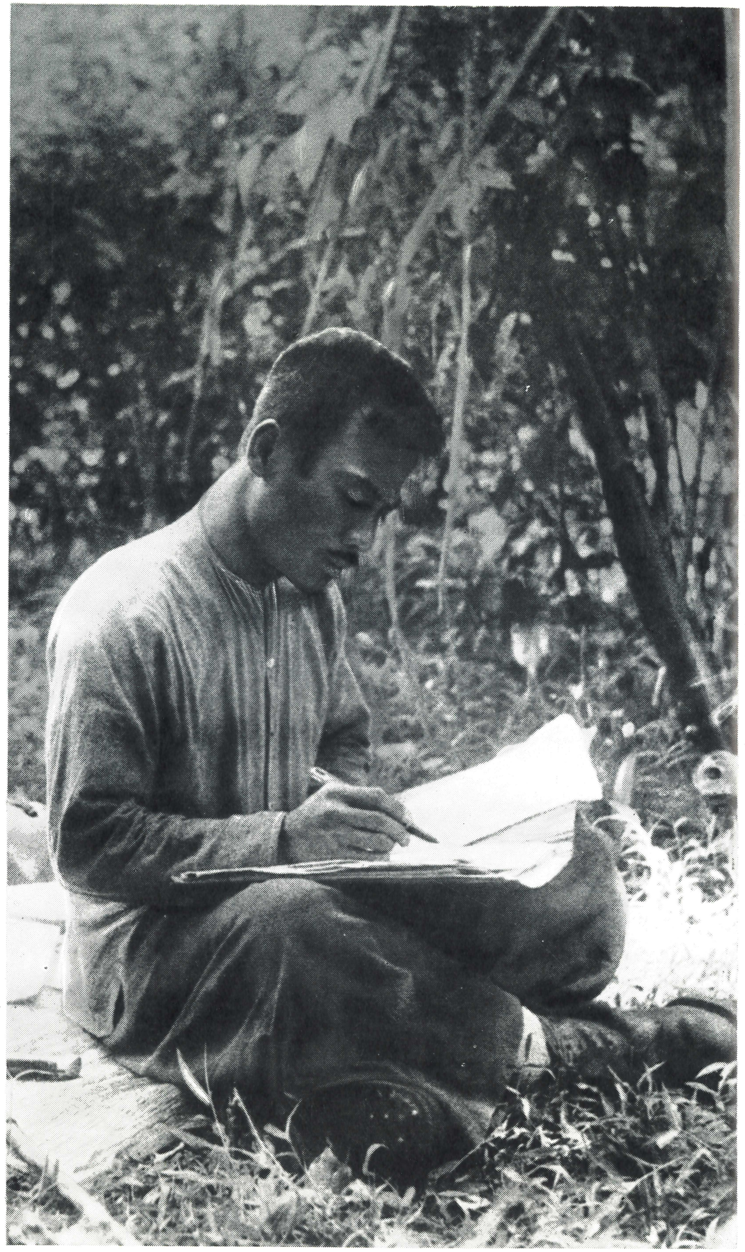
In December 1975, a National Congress of People's Representatives was convened. Comrade Kaysone Phomvihane made a speech at it. He summed up the results of the Lao people's selfless struggle for their national independence and outlined ways of building a national democratic state. On December 2, 1975, the Congress ruled to abolish monarchy in Laos and proclaim the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR). Kaysone Phomvihane was appointed Prime Minister of the Republic's government, and Prince Souphanouvong became President of the LPDR and Chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly.

The proclamation of the LPDR opened a new page in the history of Laos.

In the early 1950s, Laotian patriots led by the Lao Patriotic Front, set up by a congress held in the jungles of Houaphan Province (in the country's north) and by the government of national resistance, liberated a number of Laotian provinces. People's government bodies were set up in the liberated areas. Local people received land. Schools for children and adults were opened. Ethnic minorities, women and young people became actively involved in public life.

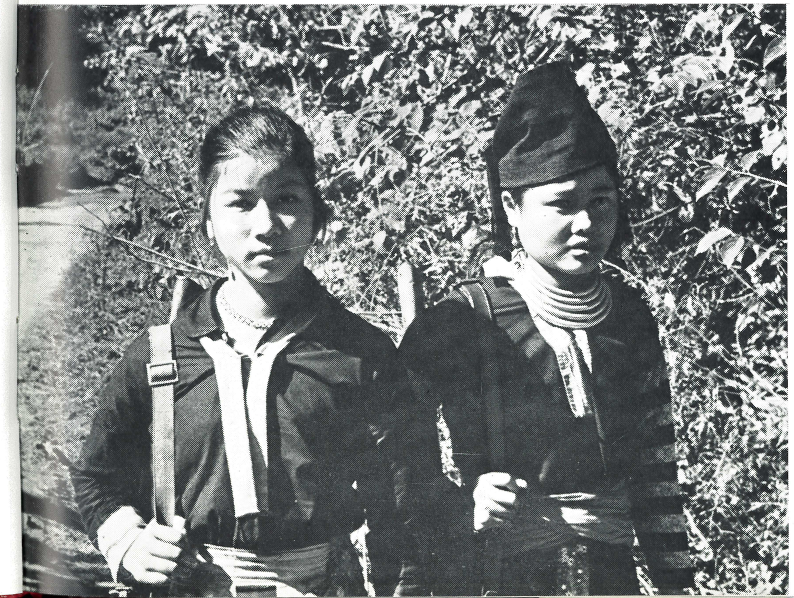
Kaysone Phomvihane speaking at a women's meeting in a liberated area.

The first detachments of the Lao People's Army were formed by armed resistance groups. They fought successfully against the colonialists.



The national resistance government led by Prince Souphanouvong explained to the masses its programme of fighting for independence and national unity. Leaflets calling on all patriotic forces to unite and fight the French imperialists were distributed all over the country.

Prince Souphanouvong writing one of the leaflets.



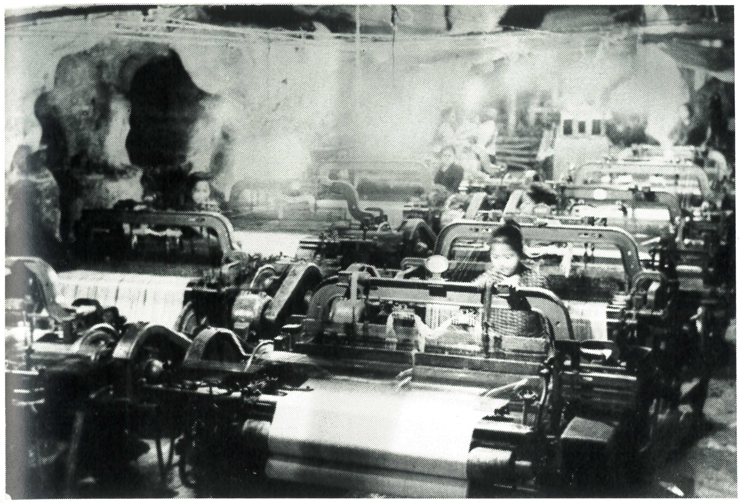
"We swear to fight for the revolution, for the nation's freedom!"

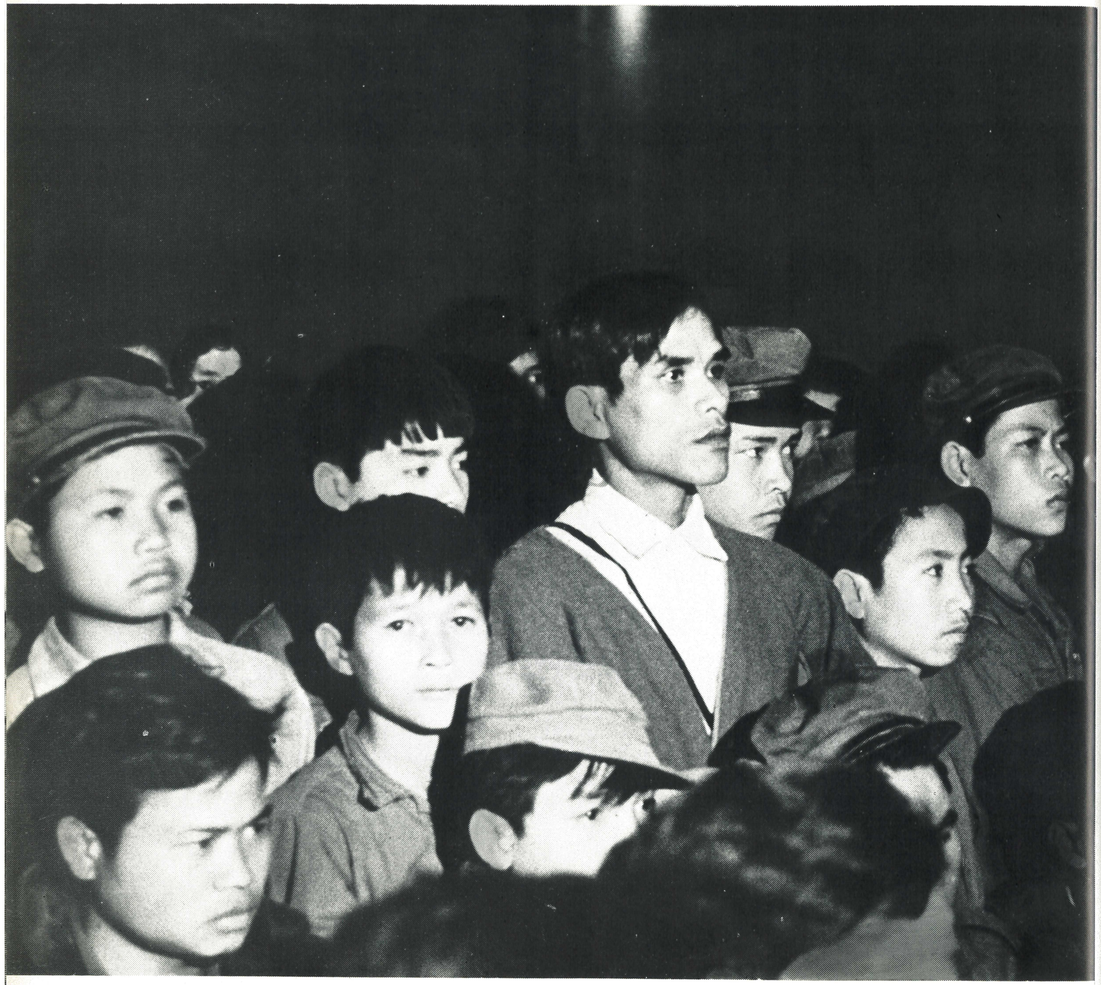
Girl-partisans of the Lao Loume and Lao Sung tribes.

After signing the 1962 Geneva agreements, the Lao Patriotic Front (LPF), representing all strata of Laotian society, did its best to adhere to those agreements. However, the Lao patriots' attempts to restore the situation in the country to normal were opposed by a right-wing grouping supported by the US militarists. The United States, whose purpose was to undermine the Laotian national-liberation movement, unleashed an aggression against Laos. In May 1964 the American Air Force started bombing the LPF-controlled areas.

American hawks raided Laotian territory. They were to blame for mothers' grief, children's injuries and tears, destruction of Laotian houses and pagodas.

But the nation could not be defeated. Military plans were worked out in the mountain caves of the liberated areas in the North. Factories and workshops functioned and newspapers were printed there.

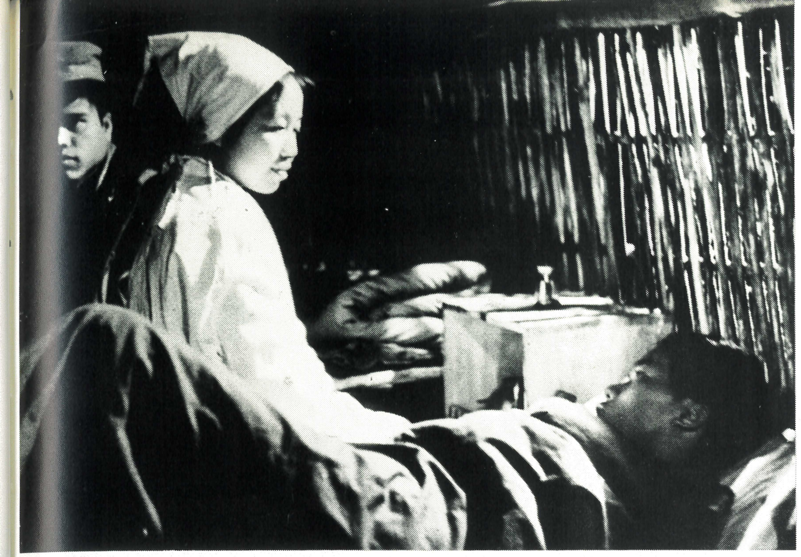


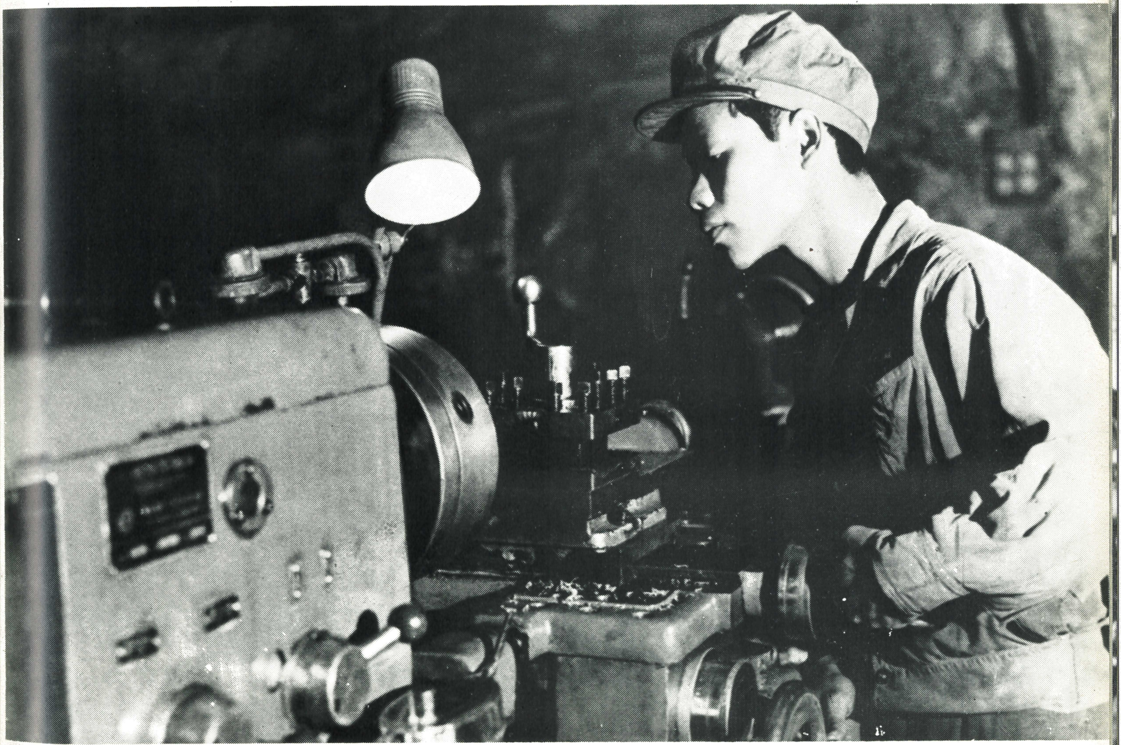


In December 1972, people of the liberated areas gathered in a mountain cave in Houaphan Province to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Soviet Union.

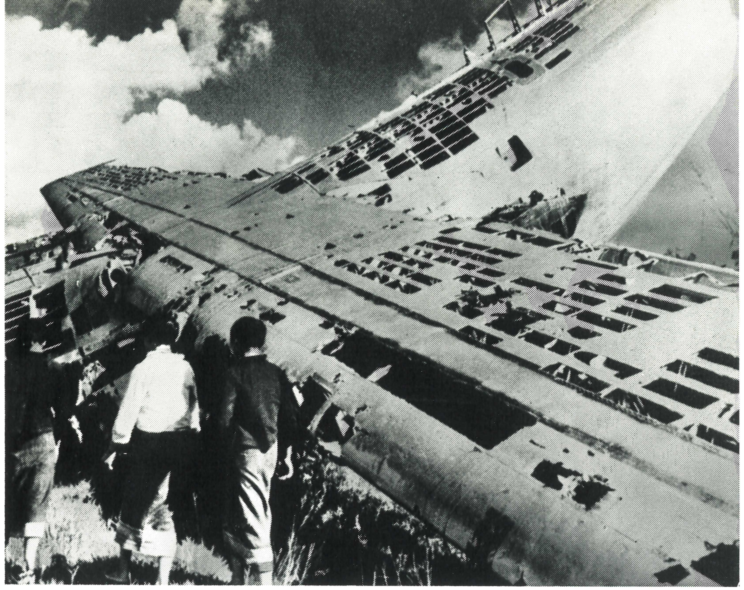
In those hard years, the USSR gave various assistance to embattled Laos, including the training of its personnel.

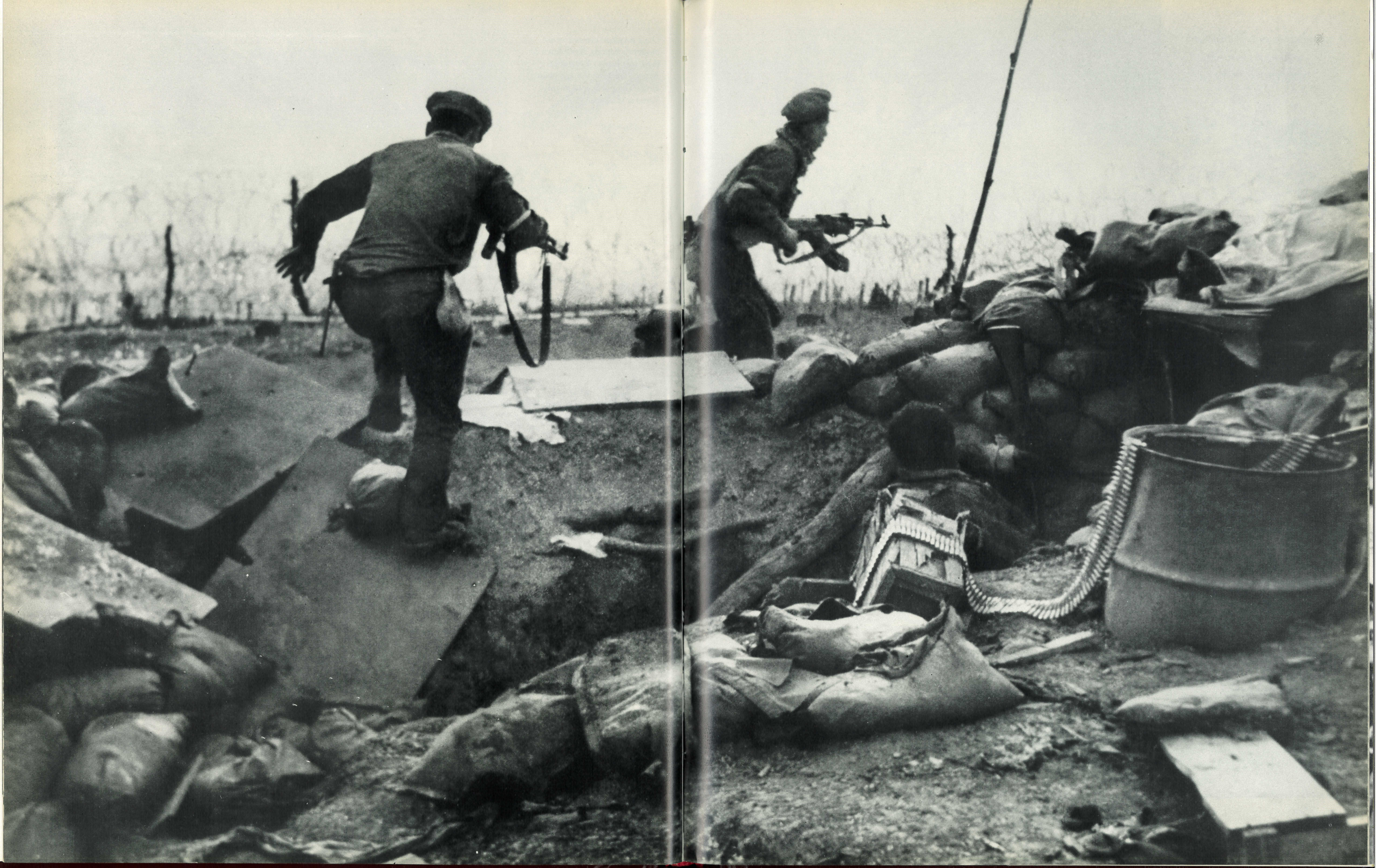
This doctor at an underground hospital and this young turner were trained in the Soviet Union.





Once they had learned to use modern weapons, servicemen of the Lao People's Liberation Army shot down the aggressor's aircraft and delivered mighty blows at the enemy.





On leave in their native village.

The first Young Pioneer Unit.

A school in a liberated region.

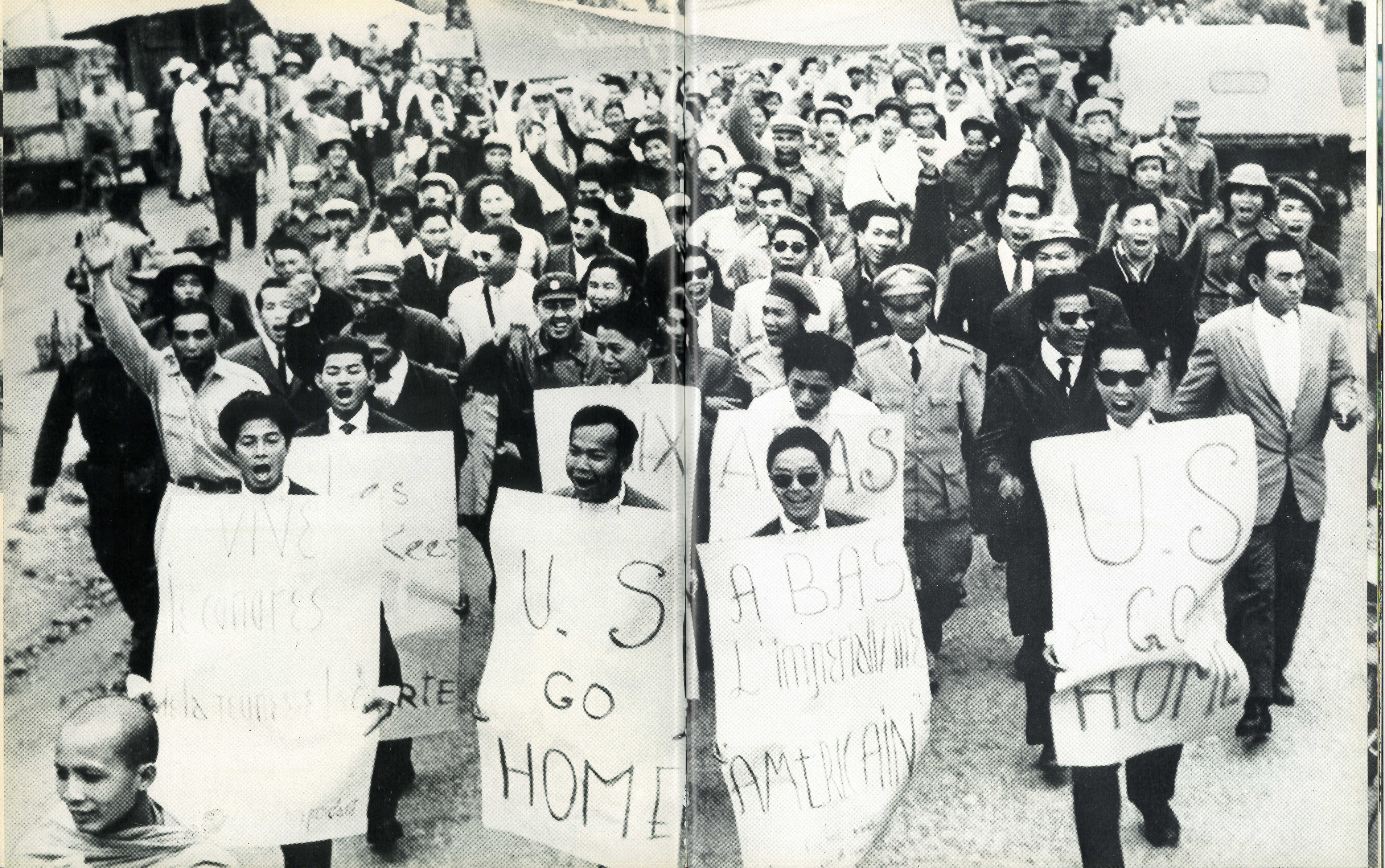
The Army helped the people and the people helped their Army.

Heroic Laotian women not only cultivated rice and built roads, but also learned military skills in home-defence units.

No American weapons could help them.

Comrade Kaysone Phomvihane decorating a serviceman.

The Lao People's Liberation Army and Vietnamese volunteers fought side-by-side. A meeting of liberators.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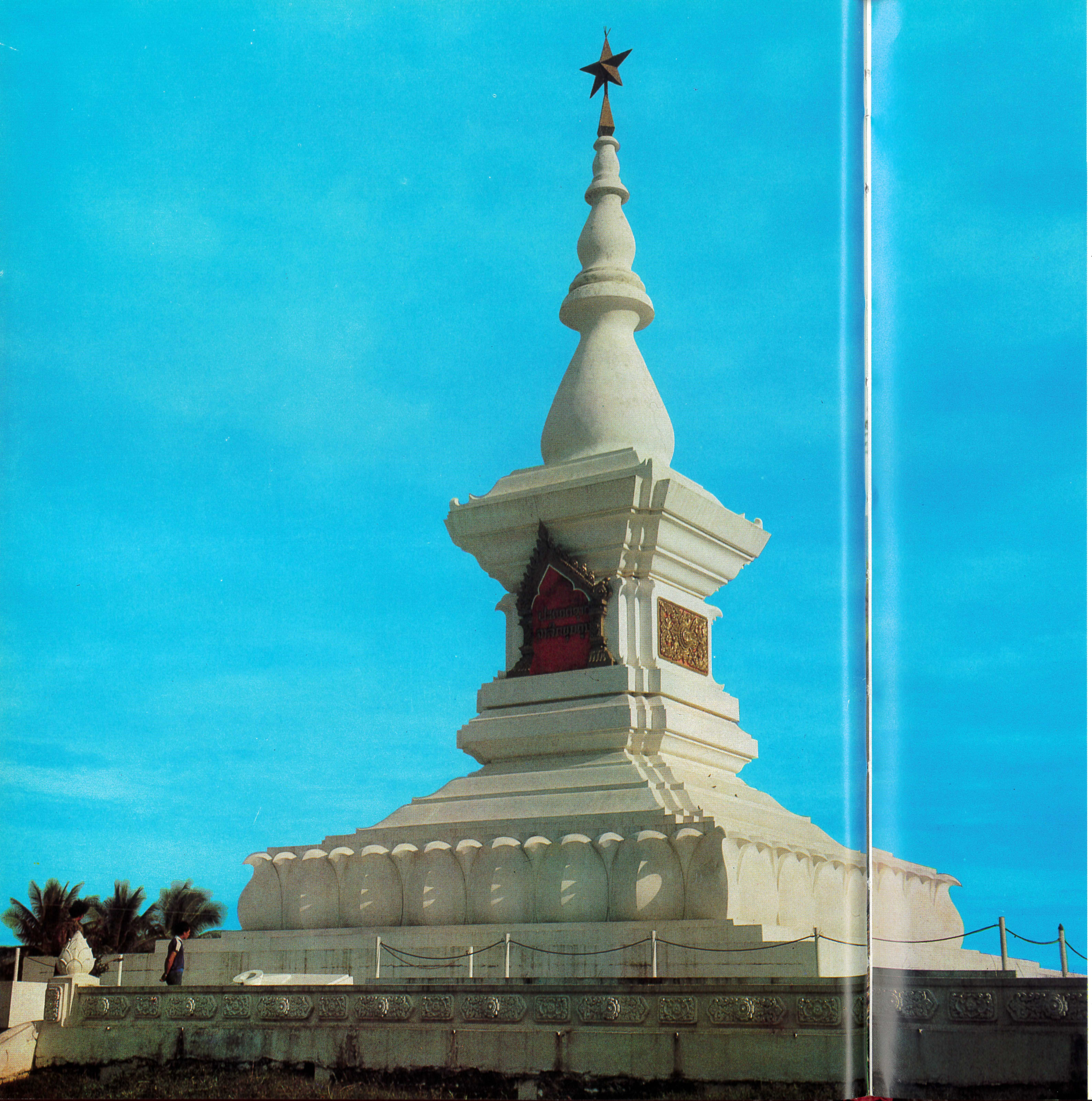
On December 2, 1975, the Lao National Congress of People's Representatives abolished the monarchy, proclaimed the Lao People's Democratic Republic and set up the Supreme People's Assembly and the republic's government. These actions were supported by all Laotians.

Pages 96-97. "Yankees Out of Laos! Yankees Go Home!" Those were the slogans of the demonstrations that swept Laos in the summer and autumn of 1975. All strata of the population supported the Patriotic Front's policy.



The nation erected this memorial in Vientiane to commemorate the heroes of the revolution, who fell fighting for Laos's happy future.

ALONG THE ROAD OF CREATION

The proclamation of the Republic marked the beginning of a new stage in the Laotian revolution, that of socialist transformation. The Lao People's Revolutionary Party announced that it would build socialism in Laos by-passing capitalism. The main effort of people's power was aimed at large-scale social and economic transformations, complete elimination of the survivals of colonialism and feudalism, resolute opposition to counter-revolutionary activity and imperialist intrigues, rehabilitation of the national economy upset by the war, and raising the population's living standards.

A special emphasis was placed on agriculture. Rural toilers faced the task of providing the country with foodstuffs and raw materials within the shortest time possible. The co-operative movement in the country gained momentum. Agricultural co-ops and communes harvest much better crops now than private farmers.

The setting-up of state farms is an important trend leading to a growing output of agricultural produce. Big all-round state farms and specialized farms are schools of advanced experience in land cultivation and livestock farming; they are centres for training agricultural experts. One such farm has been set up with Soviet assistance in Xiangkhouang Province. Its fields occupy an area of over 5,000 hectares. The farm has grown the province's biggest herd of milch cows bred from the best local stock. This was the first farm in the republic to gather in rice crops with Soviet harvesters.

The economy of Laos has scored significant achievements in the period of the three-year (1978–80) plan for the country's economic development. By the end of 1980 the state controlled over 500 enterprises. Many industrial enterprises were extended and updated. The first projects of Soviet-Laotian co-operation were accomplished: a bridge across the river Nam Neun in Houaphan Province, an oil storage, a motor-vehicle repairing factory and a hospital with the latest equipment in Vientiane.

The First Five-Year Plan for economic and social development (1981—85) set the Laotian toilers a number of important tasks. Within this period, the country's industrial output has increased significantly, the same as the amount of agricultural produce. Moreover, many big economic projects have been completed, among them bridges across the Nam Ngum and the Kading rivers on Road No. 13, an agricultural machinery repairing station, a ground station of the *Lotus* space telecommunication system and a medium-wave radio broadcasting station. All these projects were built with Soviet assistance.

The First Five-Year Plan envisages stepping up the development of major transport routes. The main effort was concentrated on the reconstruction of the 240-kilometre-long Road No. 9, linking the city of Savannakhet with the sea coast of fraternal Vietnam. The Soviet Union, Bulgaria and other CMEA countries give Laos technical assistance in building roads and bridges along the route.

Air transport has been developing rapidly in the First Five-Year Plan period. The *Lao Aviation* State Company flies airliners and helicopters of Soviet manufacture. The republic's capital is linked with provincial centres by regular air flights manned by Laotian crews. International airlines link the Lao People's Democratic Republic with the Soviet Union, Vietnam, Kampuchea and Thailand.

The current five-year plan puts a great emphasis on the more efficient use of Laos's natural resources, especially on its power industry. Energy production has increased nearly four times compared to that in 1976. Early in 1985 a new victory was won in this field: the third turbine of the country's major hydroelectric power station on the Nam Ngum began functioning.

Social and economic construction in the country calls for an increase in the number of national experts trained for industry, agriculture, public health, education and culture.

"Today the country building a new society," wrote Kaysone Phomvihane, "needs a new man, new in spirit, if I may say so, determined to construct socialism and possessing adequate knowledge." The number of graduates from the Done Dok Teacher Training Institute, Medical Institute, Higher Political School and vocational technical schools is growing annually. The construction of a new polytechnical college in Vientiane will soon be completed. Every year Laotian factories and construction sites, hospitals and educational establishments benefit by an influx of new personnel, young Laotian experts and skilled workers trained at higher and vocational technical schools of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

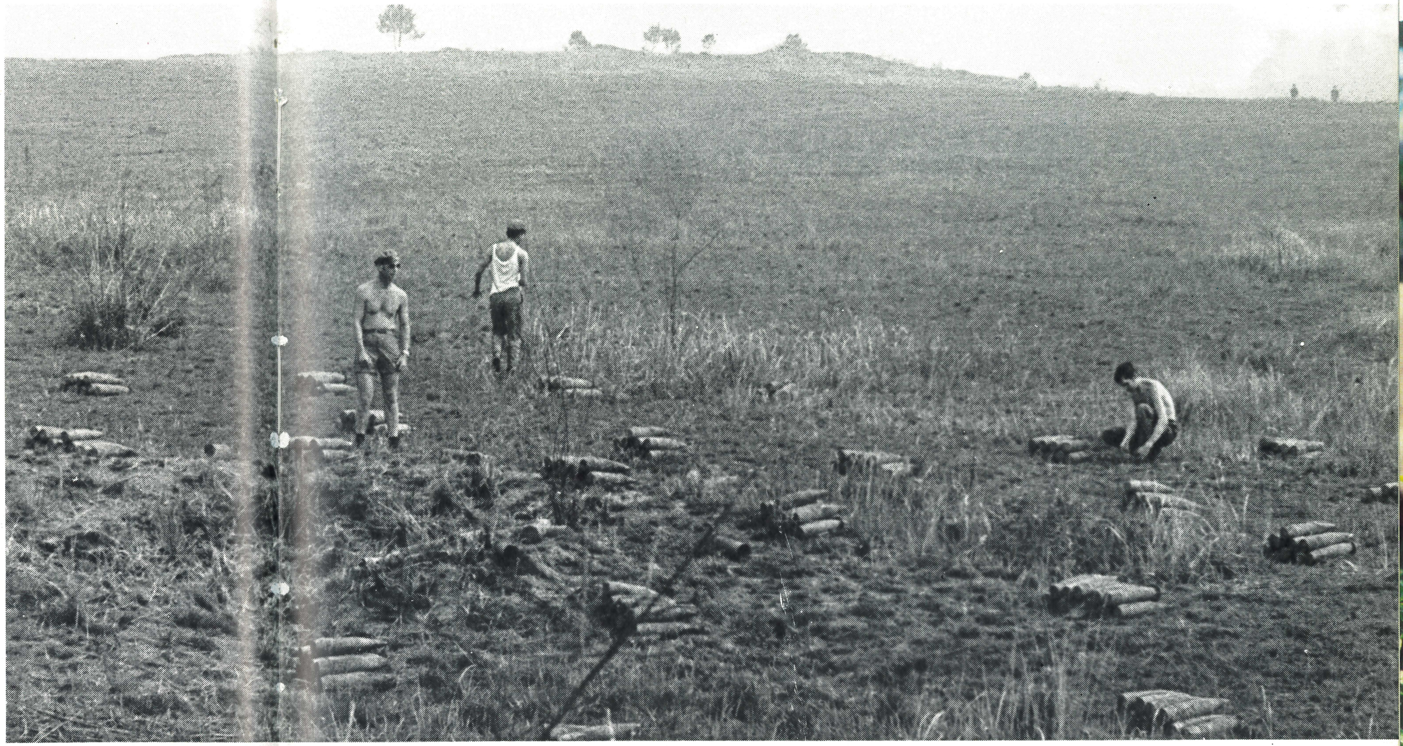
When the Lao People's Democratic Republic was proclaimed in 1975, 69 per cent of Laotians could neither read nor write. By the end of the first five-year period, illiteracy has basically been eliminated.

Public health care has also achieved a great deal. Under the new government many hospitals and health centres have been built not only in the central areas of Laos but also in the remotest mountain regions. A large hospital compound is being constructed in a Vientiane suburb with Soviet assistance. It will be the republic's major medical centre.

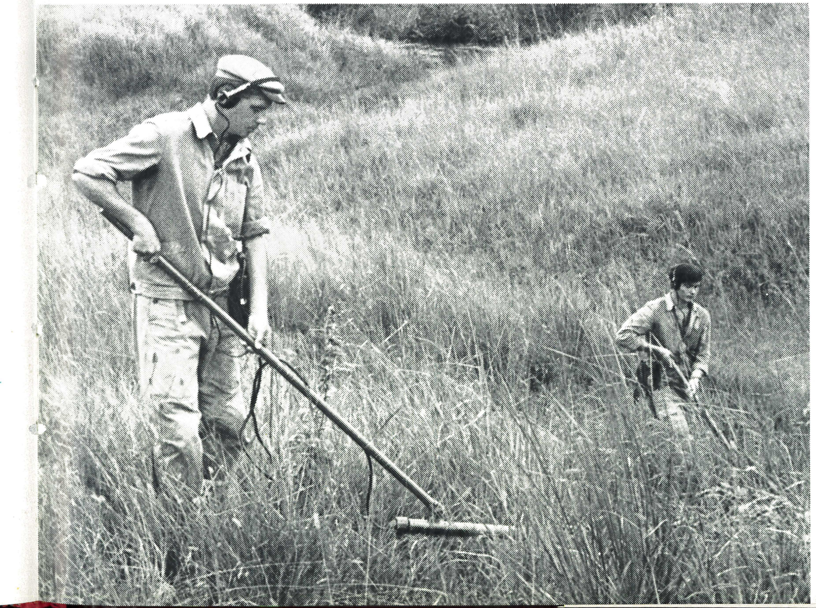
The successful implementation of the First Five-Year Plan has been a great step forward, contributing to the economic potential and military defences of Laos.

The Lao People's Liberation Army protects the socialist gains of the nation. Laotian officers and men, equipped with modern weapons and military technology, defend their working people and guard the country's borders, ready to deal with any infringements on their state's independence.

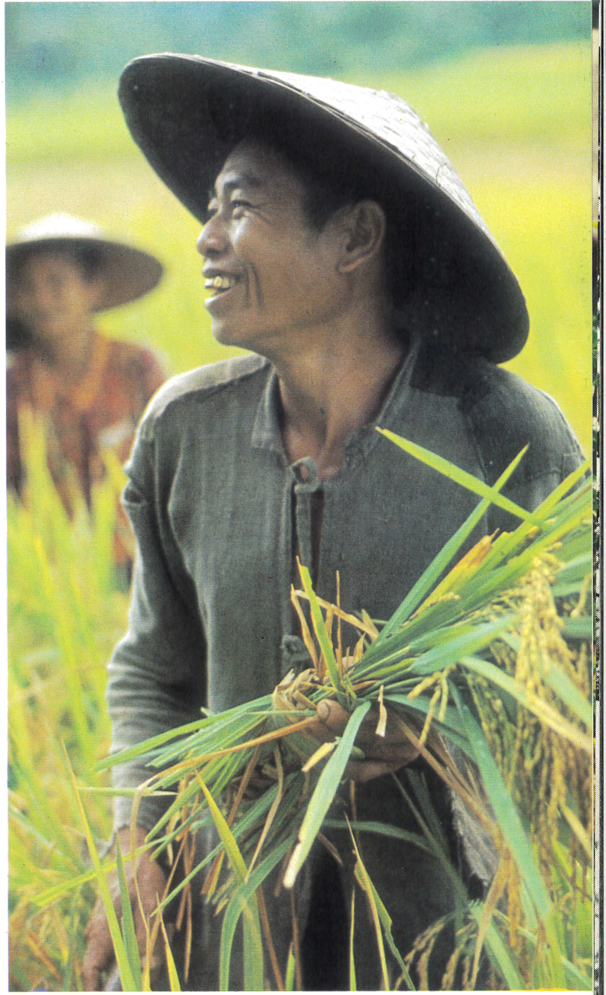
At all stages of its development the Lao People's Democratic Republic has been supported by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. The Lao people highly appreciate this internationalist support and unfailing assistance. "Our active solidarity with Vietnam and Kampuchea, our solidarity with the great Soviet Union and other socialist countries," wrote Kaysone Phomvihane, "will always remain the corner-stone of our Party and state foreign policy, the source of our power which no enemy will ever be able to undermine."

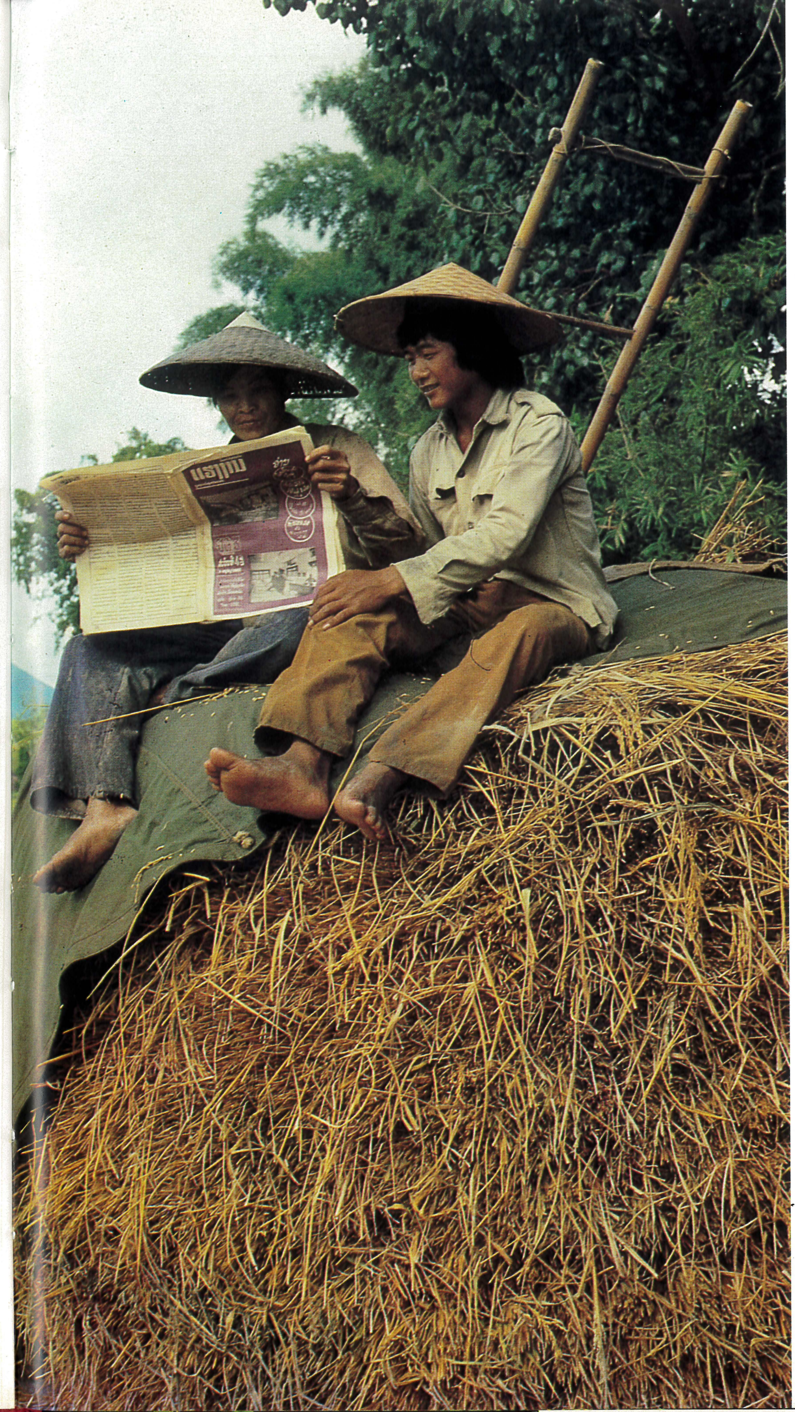


Soviet and Laotian field engineers extracting unexploded bombs and shells from the scarred Laotian soil. Peace had come to the land.



Fields free of shells and bombs were ploughed by agricultural machinery from fraternal countries.





Laotian rice-farmers, members of the first rural co-ops.

Peasants in a field camp during a short break.

Overleaf. Harvesting coffee beans on the Plateau des Bolovens, Champasak Province.

Page 113. Tea bushes in Pakxong, Champasak Province.

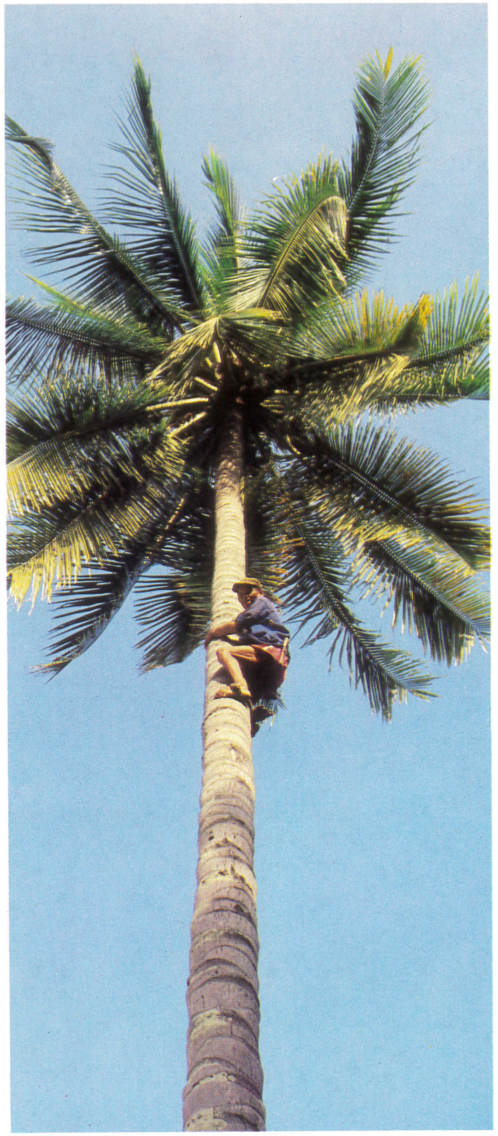
A peasant of a southern state co-op on his way to the tea plantation.

Pages 114-115. Harvesting coffee beans at a state farm in Pakxong, Champasak Province.

Durian. Pakxong, Champasak Province.

Papaw is grown in all Laotian provinces.

Coconuts



Bananas are a staple food culture in Laos.

A coconut tree

Laotian rivers abound in fish. A team of young fishermen on their way to work.

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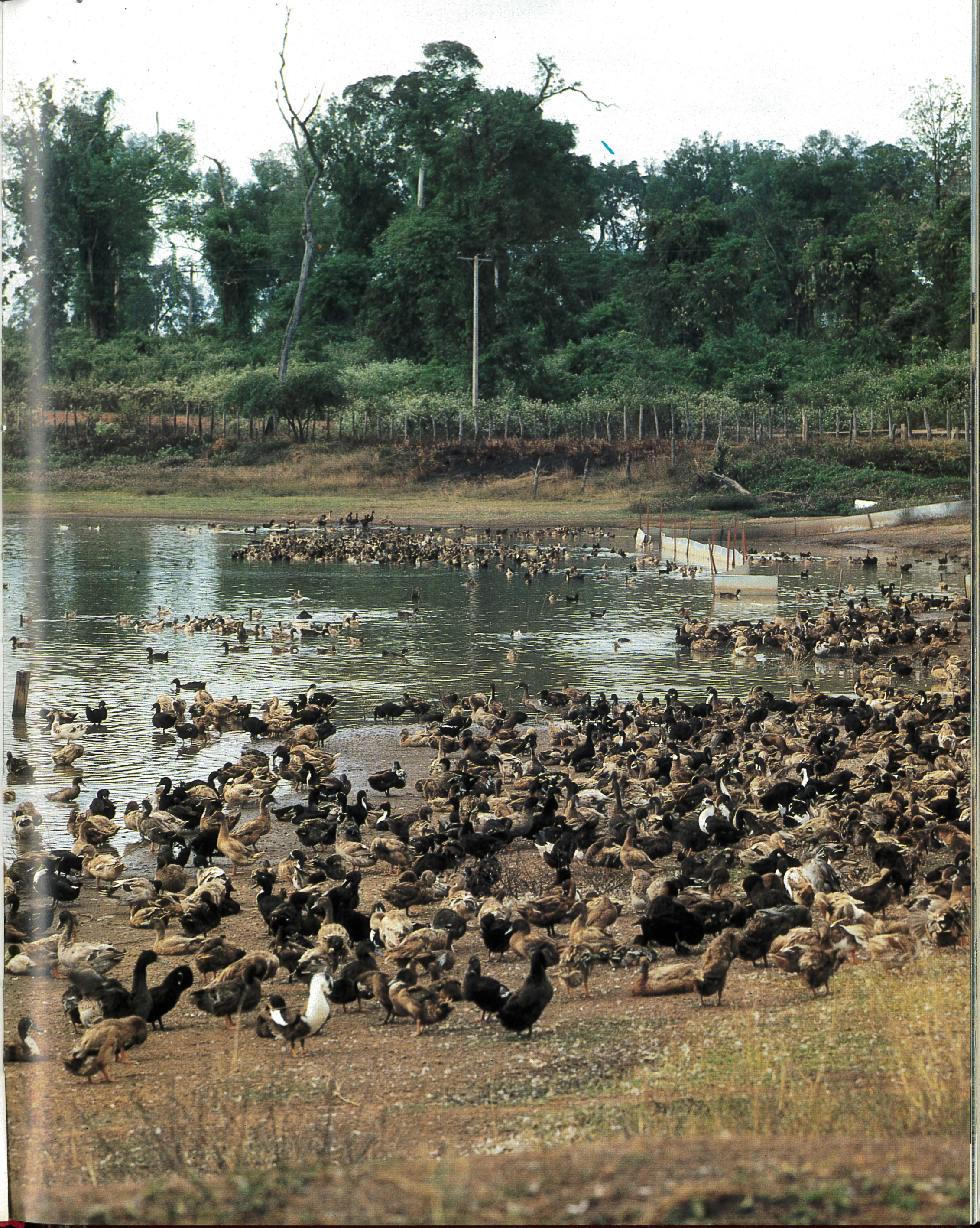
The republic puts a great emphasis on livestock farming. In the years of people's power, total stocks have increased several times over.

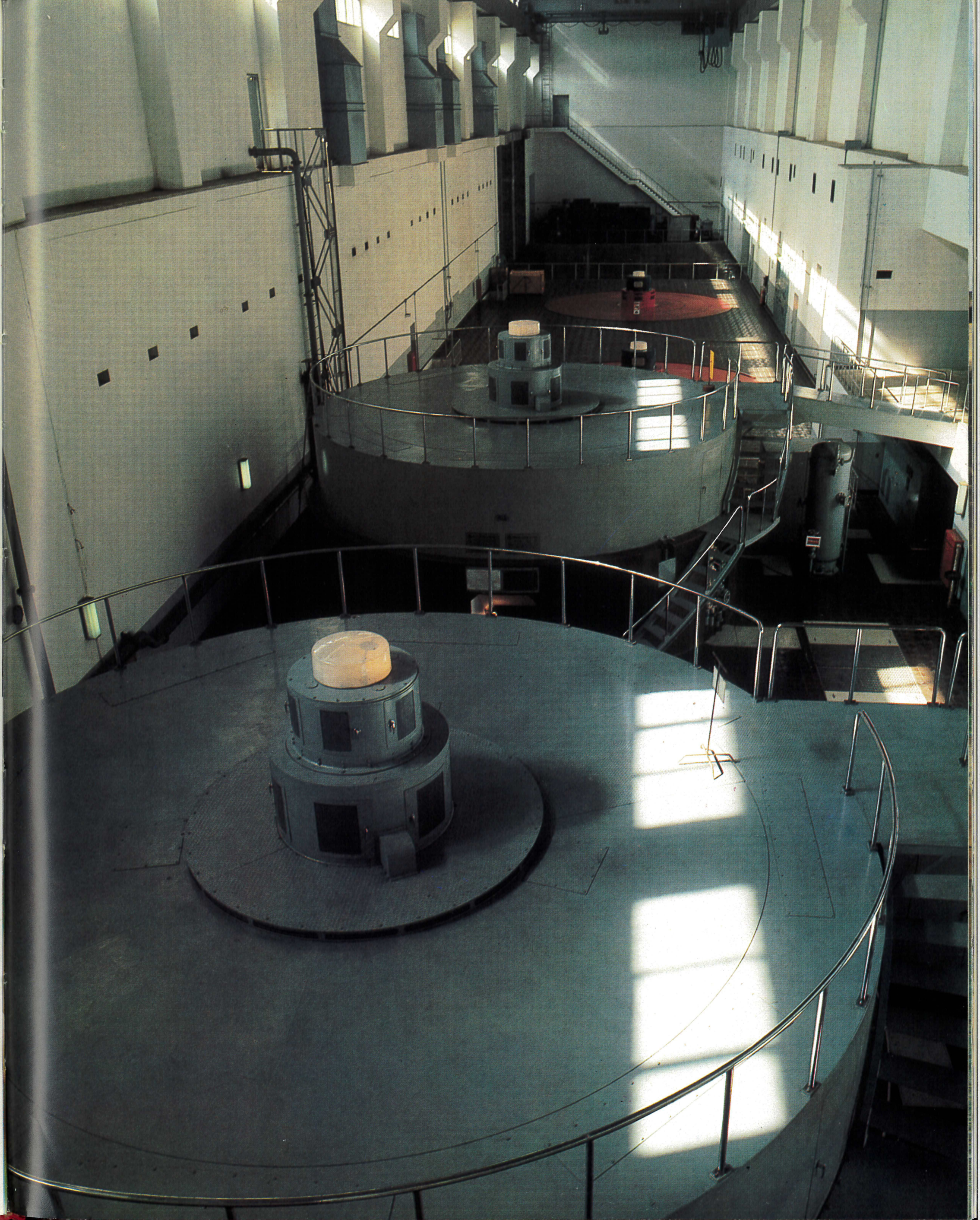
Overleaf. A tobacco plantation

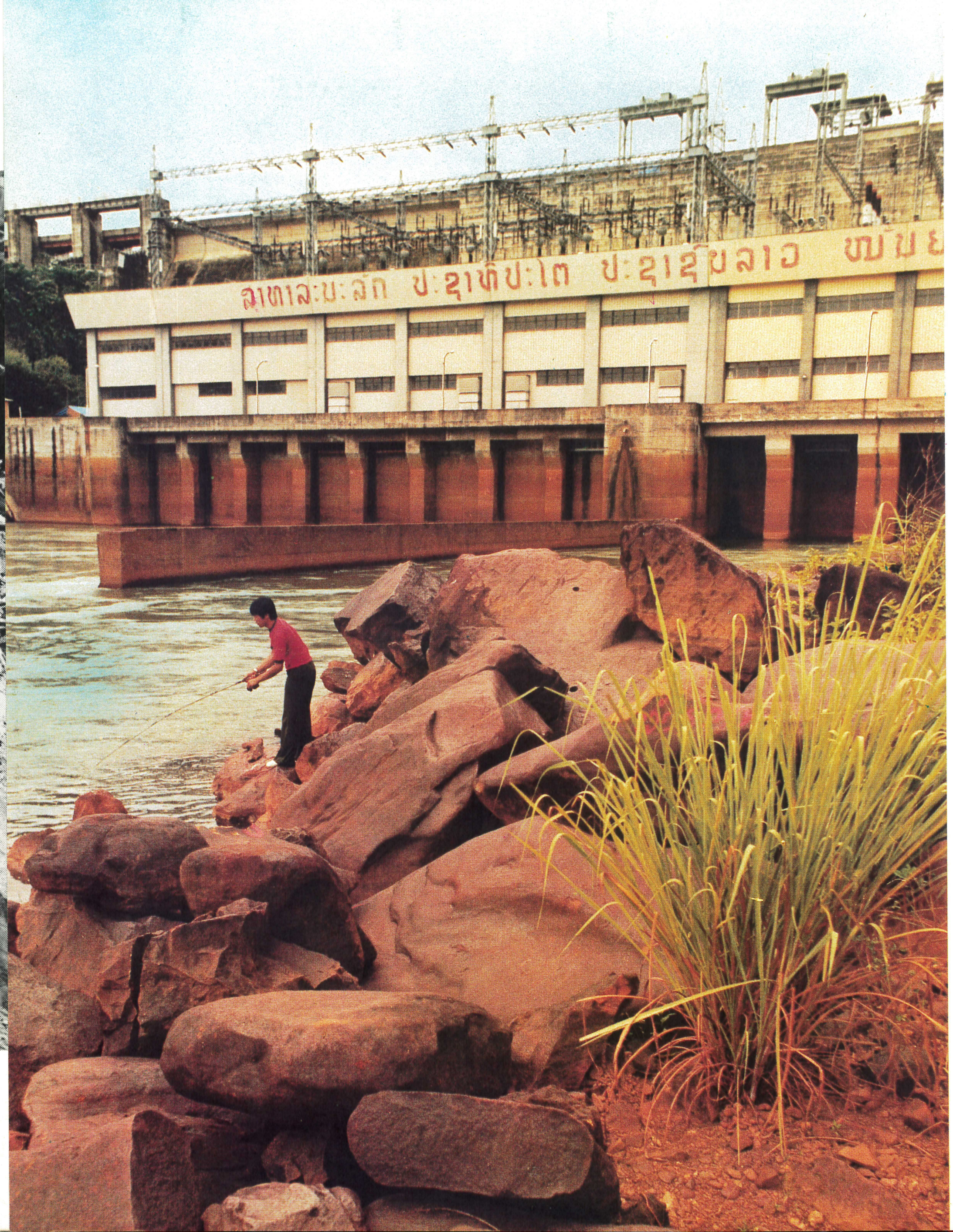
A promising sphere of agriculture. Many co-ops and state farms have undertaken to build large poultry farms.



Pages 124-125. The young republic's working class is growing in numbers. Its ranks are swelled every year by the young graduates of vocational technical schools who study in Laos, the Soviet Union and Vietnam. Having mastered the trades essential for their country and the latest machinery, they build industrial enterprises and housing for the workers.

Canals in Laos have always been built jointly by local people. On the initiative of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union, all hydrotechnical and power projects have been declared "youth projects".





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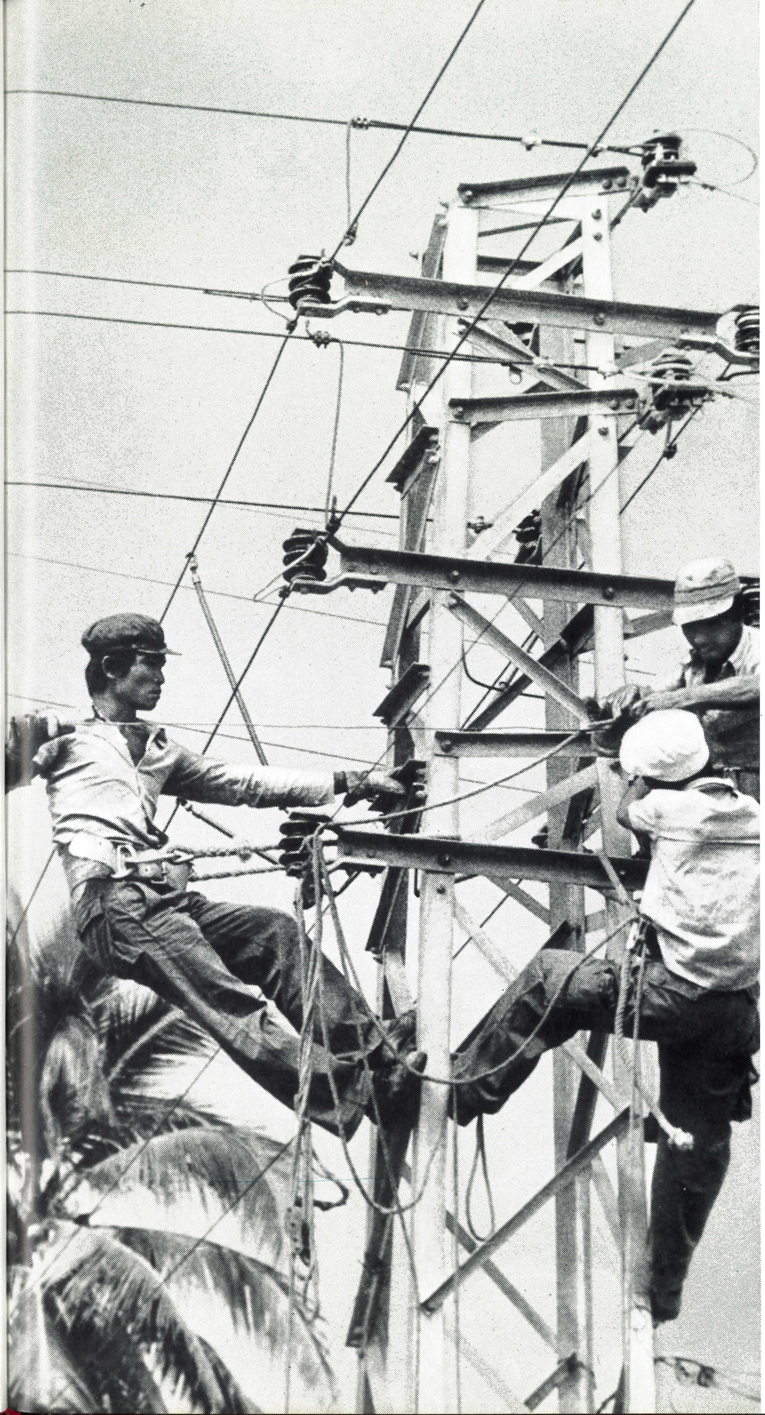
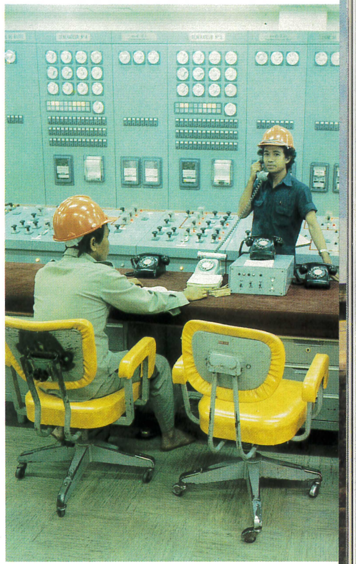
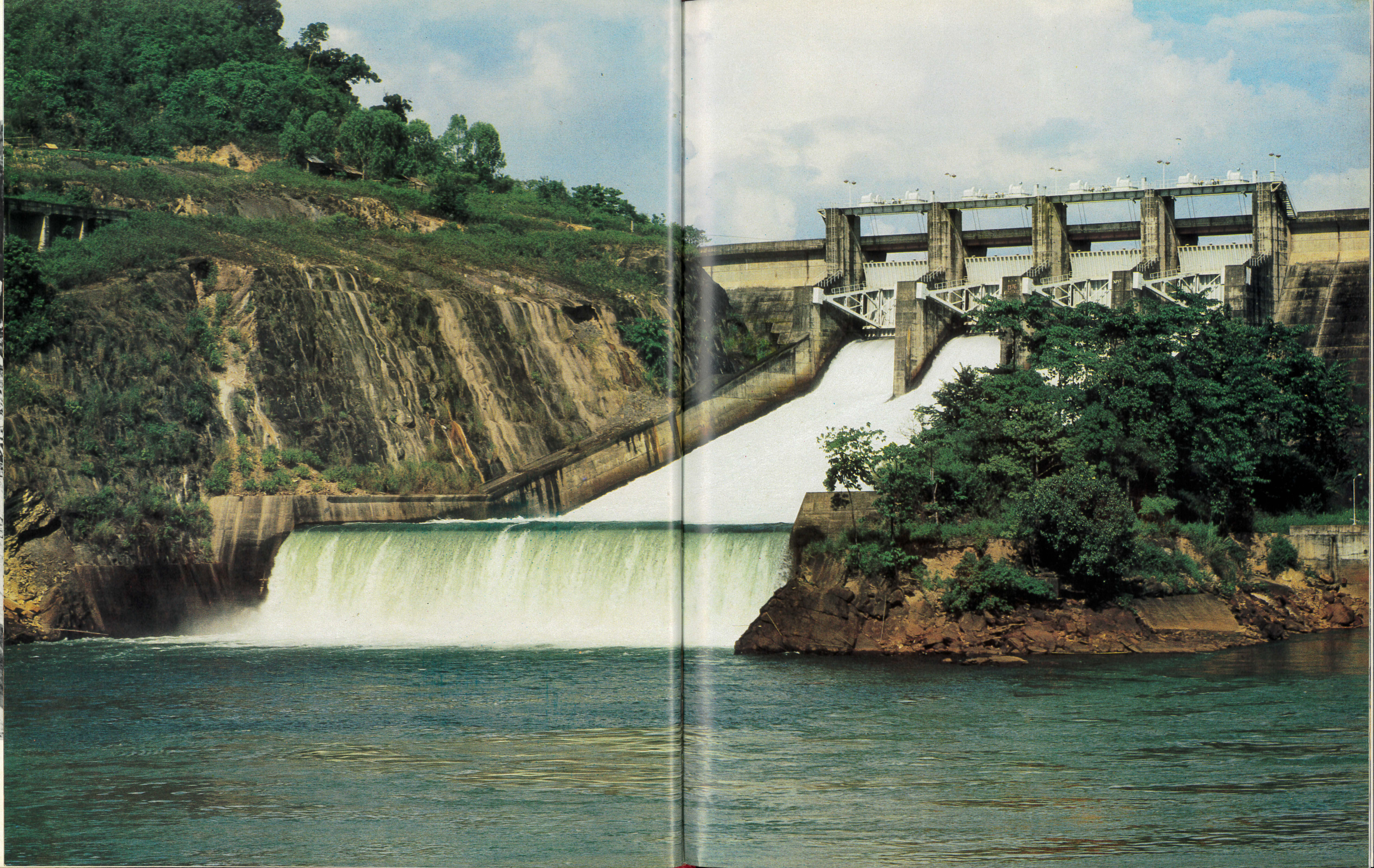




The youth team works really hard at the Nam Ngum Hydroelectric Power Station, the biggest in the country. The station constantly increases the production of electricity.



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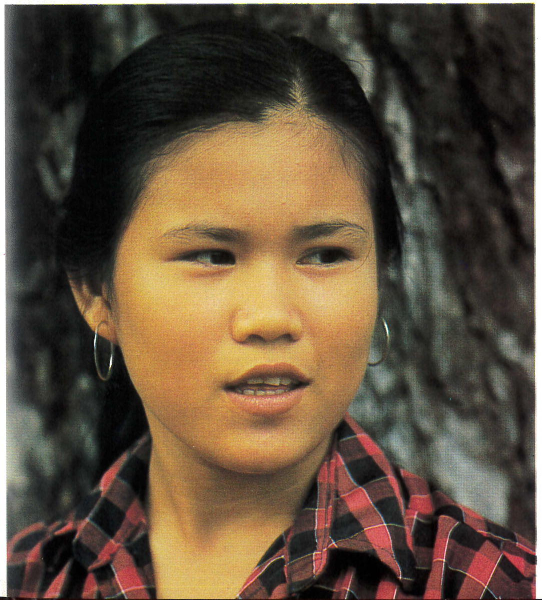
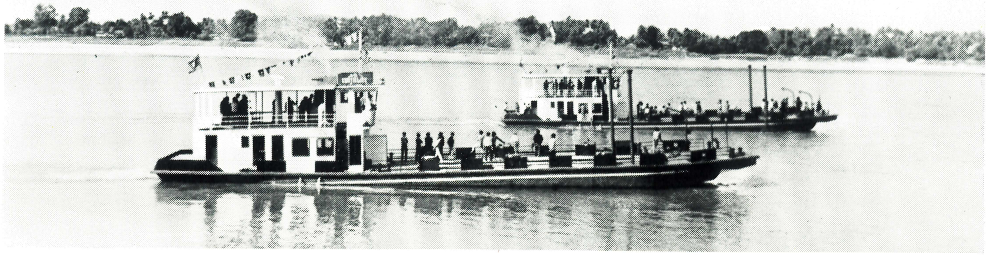


Together with other Laotian workers the country's young people work selflessly at the major economic projects of th First Five-Year Plan.



The river transport of Laos is increasing its turnover.

Soviet experts are working side-by-side with their Laotian colleagues on national construction projects, factories and other enterprises. Laotian and Soviet workers laying the foundations of a hospital near Vientiane.

Repairing agricultural machinery

Overleaf. Airliners and helicopters have become common even in the remotest parts of Laos.

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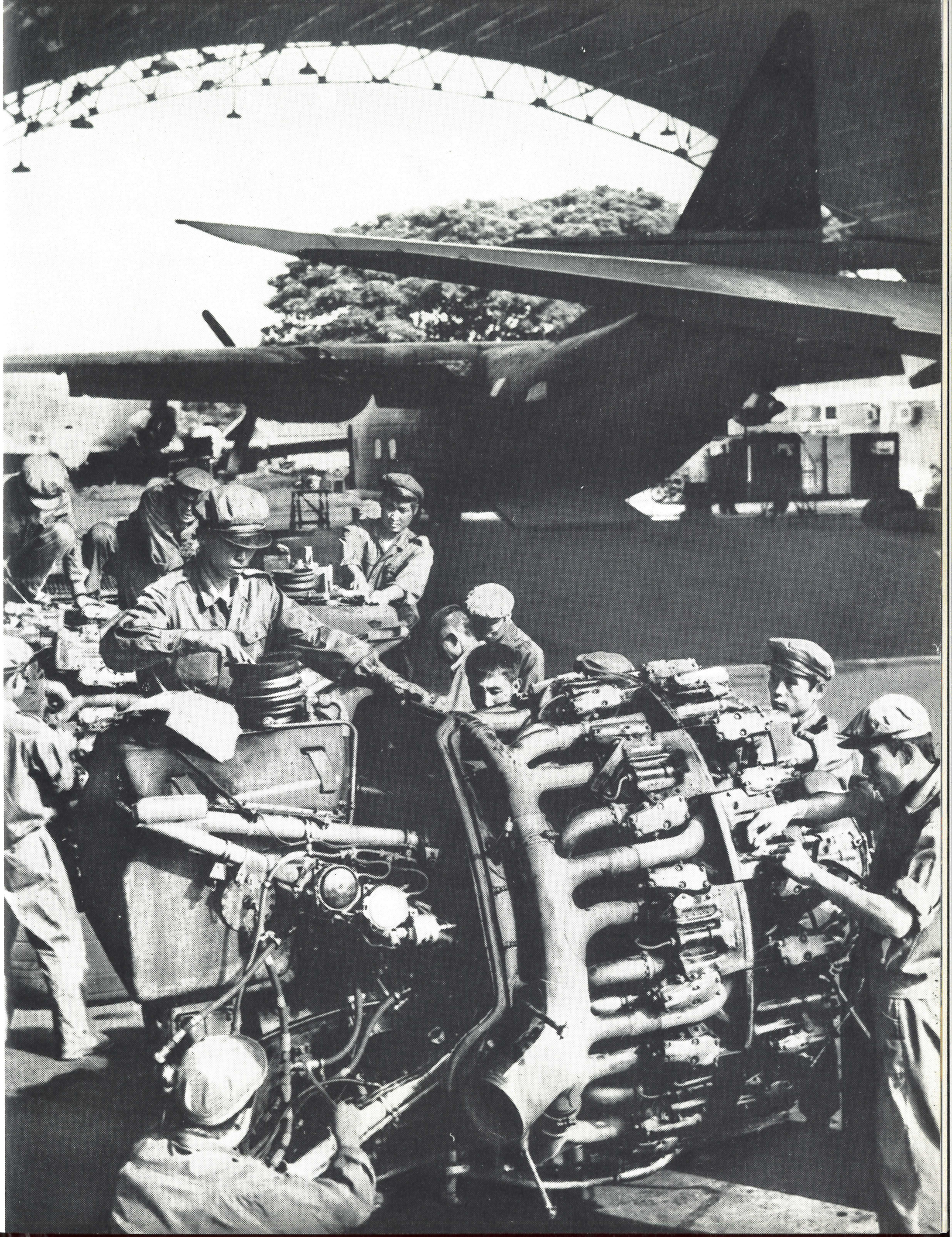
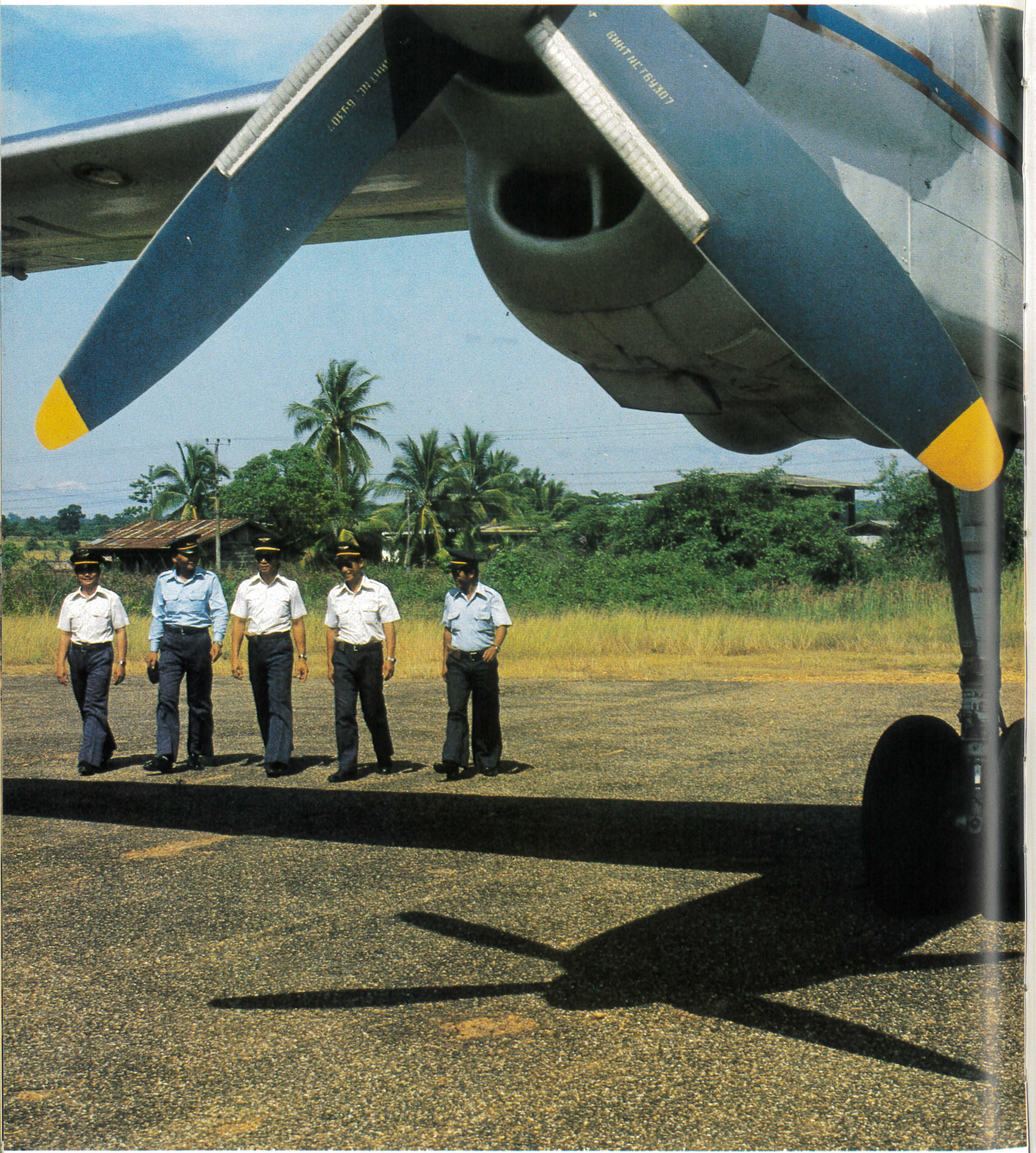




There are few roads in Laos, which is why so many new air routes have been opened during the years of people's power. The liners of the *Lao Aviation* State Company now fly to the administrative centres of all the sixteen provinces. They are operated by Laotian crews and serviced by Laotian mechanics.

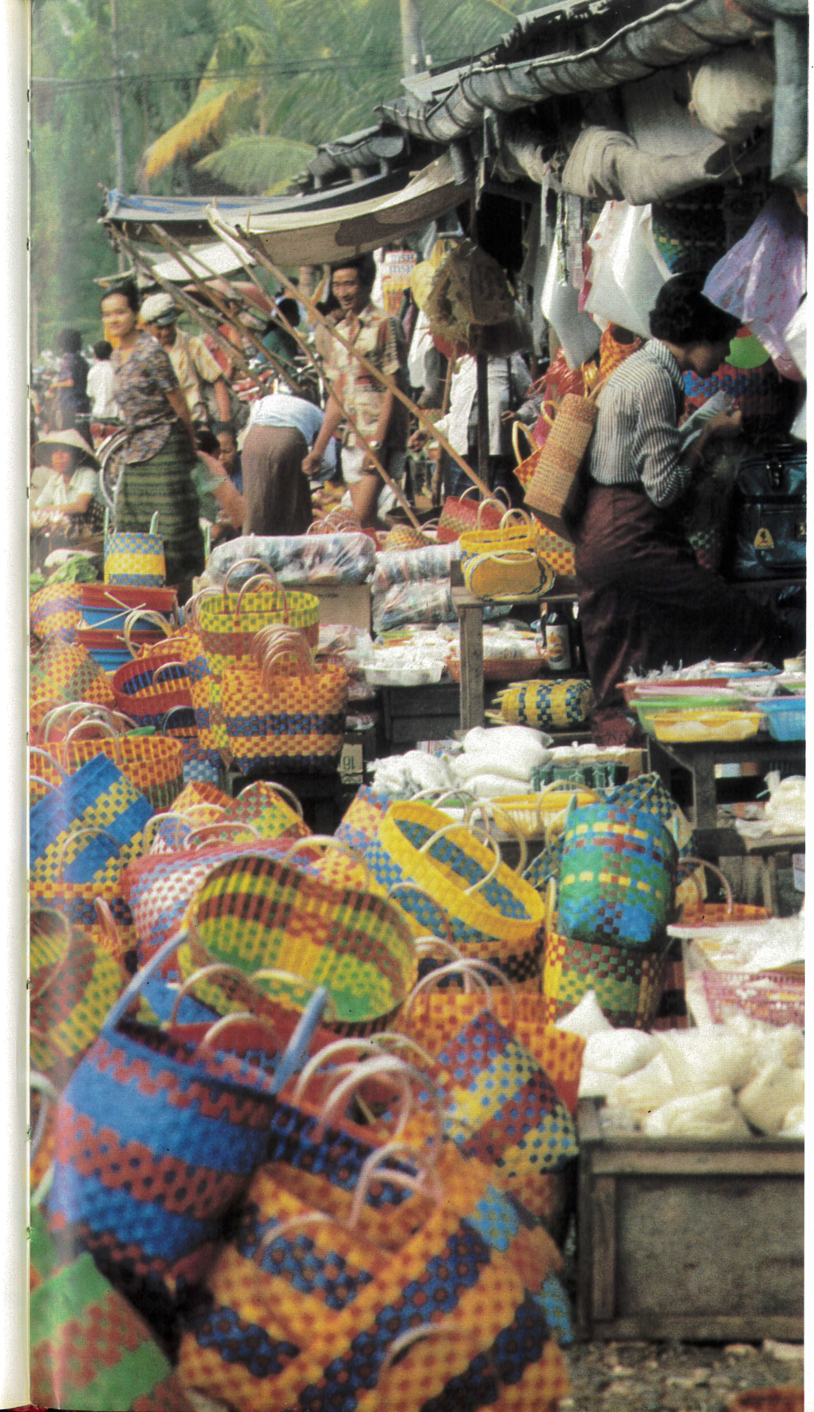
Lao women have mastered many professions and trades. Among them there are tractor-drivers, car-drivers and concrete-layers. As for this girl, she is an air hostess.

Timber is the country's wealth. Elephants, those good-natured and powerful animals, still help people in remote logging areas.

The production of the Vientiane Timber-Processing Enterprise is popular well beyond the country's borders.

Laos has long been famed for its folk crafts.

Local co-ops sell a growing number of goods produced by folk craftsmen and an increasing amount of agricultural produce at the country's markets.



Overleaf. The people of Vientiane, the capital of Laos, which is situated on the Mekong, are early risers.

Thousands of students have been enrolled in the schools and colleges set up in the years of people's power.

Overleaf. Workers and employees go to work by bicycle and motorbicycle, the city's main form of transport.

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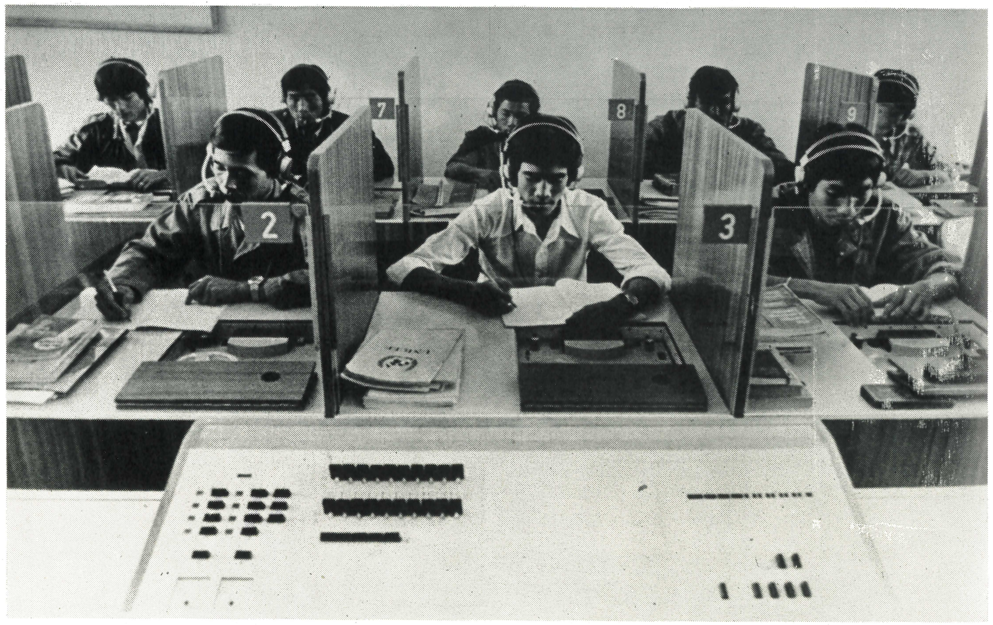


Everyone is a student in the republic which is constructing a new life.

Classes in the language laboratory at the Done Dok Teacher Training Institute (Vientiane).

A Russian class at the Teacher Training Institute.

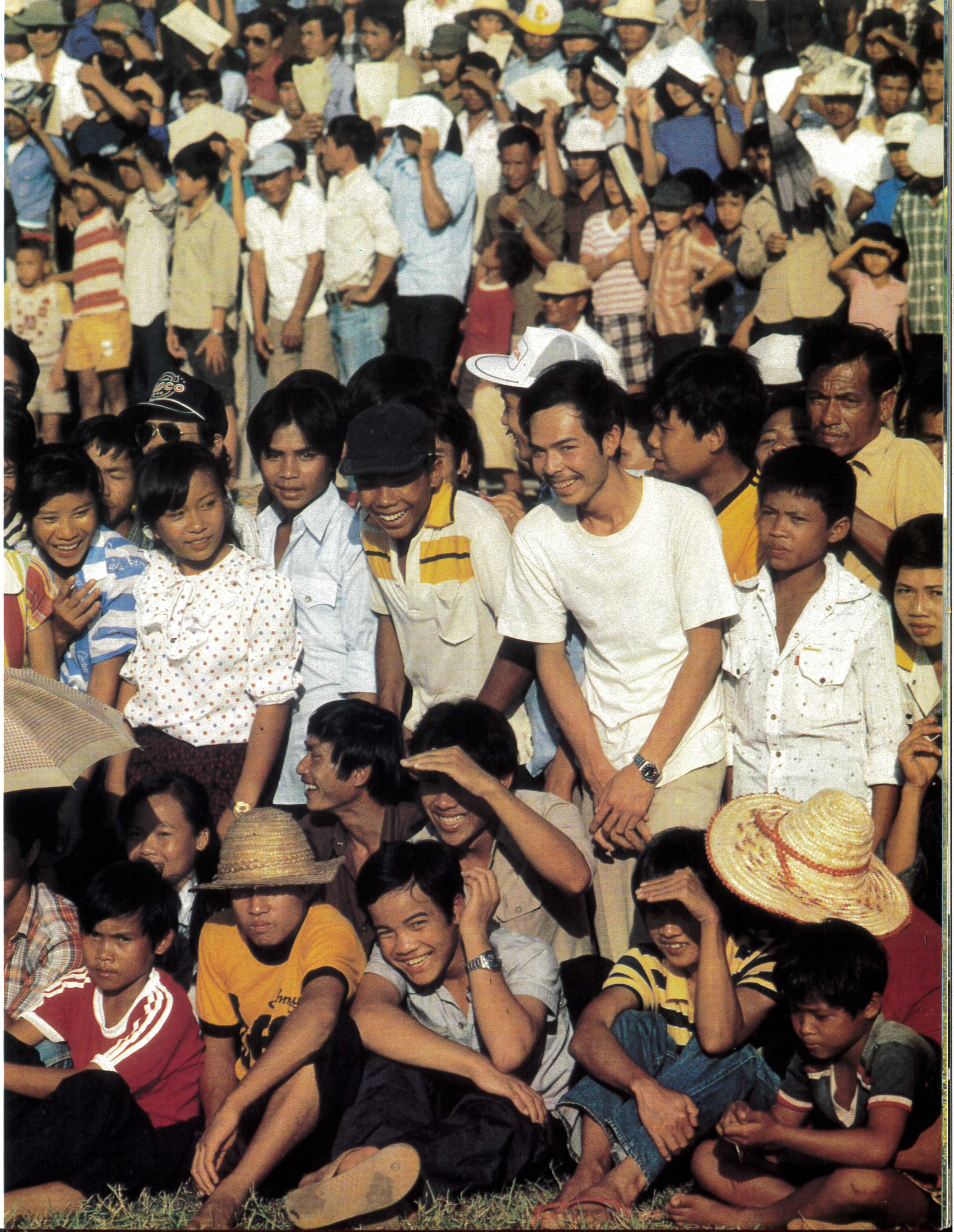
A future schoolmistress.

The republic's Central Hospital.
In the operating theatre.

Doctors of the Central Hospital travel to the remotest parts of the country to do medical checkups.

In a laboratory of the Vientiane Medical Institute.

Ball games are an ancient pastime in Laos. During the New Year celebrations in the north of Laos, in the mountains inhabited by the Lao Sung, boys and girls play this game, aiming the ball at the ones they like. City people have learned to play volleyball, basketball and soccer. Every soccer match held in the Vientiane Central Stadium is attended by thousands of fans, especially the friendly matches between Lao and Soviet teams.



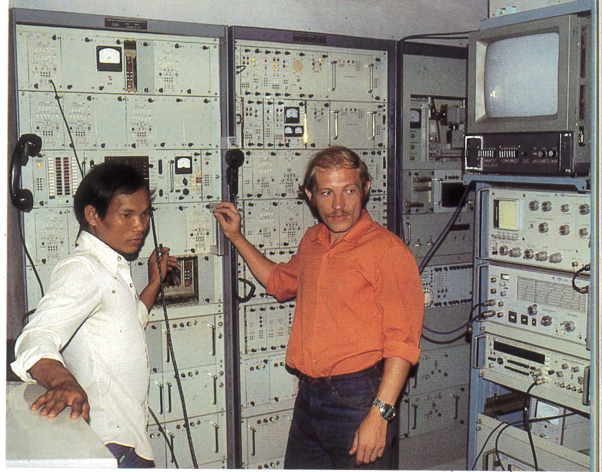
The Lao people love holidays and know how to enjoy them. On a Sunday in November, festively dressed people of Vientiane go to the banks of the Mekong to watch a pirogue race accompanied by drumming. It is a folk custom to say good-bye to the rainy season on the day of the pirogue races. These craft are 20 to 25 metres long; they can accommodate up to 60 paddlers sitting in two rows.

The New Year is celebrated in April when the dry season is over, giving way to the season of tropical showers. Still, some tribes (for instance, the Lao Sung, who live in the north of Laos) celebrate it in December (each mountain village has its own New Year Day).

The children at this playground in Vientiane are always in festive mood.

The soloists of the State Song and Dance Company wear the traditional costumes of the different Laotian ethnic groups. (see the preceding pages.)

These girls came to the capital from different provinces. Now they are mastering the basic elements of national dances. Cherishing the tradition of classical dancing, the company members also create modern dances.



The *Lotus* ground TV station, built near Vientiane with Soviet assistance, makes it possible to receive, and broadcast regularly to Laotian viewers, TV programmes from the USSR and other socialist countries. It also broadcasts local TV programmes.

Children are the republic's future. People's government does its best to make them happy.

The country's defenders are always on guard. The servicemen of the Lao People's Liberation Army are ready to resist any infringements on the nation's peaceful life.

OUR FUTURE BEGINS TODAY

Led by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, the Lao people confidently follow the road of socialism. The Third Congress of the Party, held in April 1982, summed up the Lao people's intense work and hard struggle within the past few years and outlined their tasks for the future. The congress was an important political event both for the country and for the international Communist and working-class movement. The Party forum approved the course aimed at the creation of material and technical foundations of socialism in Laos and outlined its main directions. The congress demonstrated the growing maturity and power of the Laotian revolution. It showed convincingly that the LPRP was daily strengthening its contacts with the masses who trust their vanguard and follow it. The nation considers the Party's policy to be an expression of the working people's vital interests and aspirations.

The Laotian toilers set great store by co-operation with the Soviet Union, Vietnam, other fraternal countries and progressive forces of the world. They know that their present achievements and future prospects will depend on aid and assistance from those forces. "We can state with satisfaction that since the victory of the new government this country has become a member of the socialist community with the Soviet Union as its bulwark," said Kaysone Phomvihane at the Third Party Congress. "This is the result of the struggle by the Party and the nation, the expression of the confidence and the lofty feeling of socialist internationalism which the parties and fraternal peoples of the socialist countries have for us. We must do our best to be worthy of their confidence."

The meeting of Prince Souphanouvong, member of the Politbureau of the LPRP Central Committee, President of Laos and Chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly, with General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev in March 1985, contributed much to the development of co-operation between the two parties. Their talks confirmed the two countries' mutual wish to develop all-round Soviet-Laotian co-operation, to work persistently towards the relaxation of international tension and peace.

Laos's various contacts with other socialist countries are also growing and developing. Thus, Hungary is helping Laos to build hydrotechnical projects, Cuba is assisting it to extend sugar-cane plantations, the GDR is training experts for it, Bulgaria is assisting it in the sphere of culture and Mongolia in livestock farming. Vietnam is doing a great deal to help Laos rehabilitate and develop various branches of its economy. Laos has signed an agreement on economic, scientific, technical and cultural co-operation with Kampuchea.

The Third Summit Conference of the countries of Indochina, held in Vientiane in February 1983, was important for further consolidation of the solidarity and all-round co-operation of the three countries of Indochina. The conference outlined the basic principles of co-operation between Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, which showed their determination to help each other in economic construction and opposition to foreign interference.

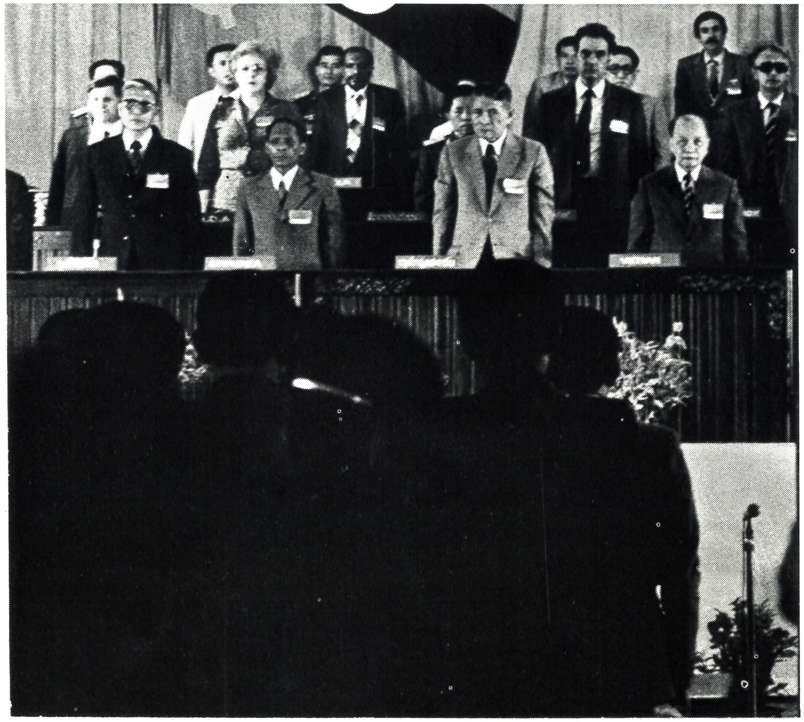
The participants in the conference confirmed their unity with the Soviet Union, other countries of the socialist community and all progressive forces in the world.

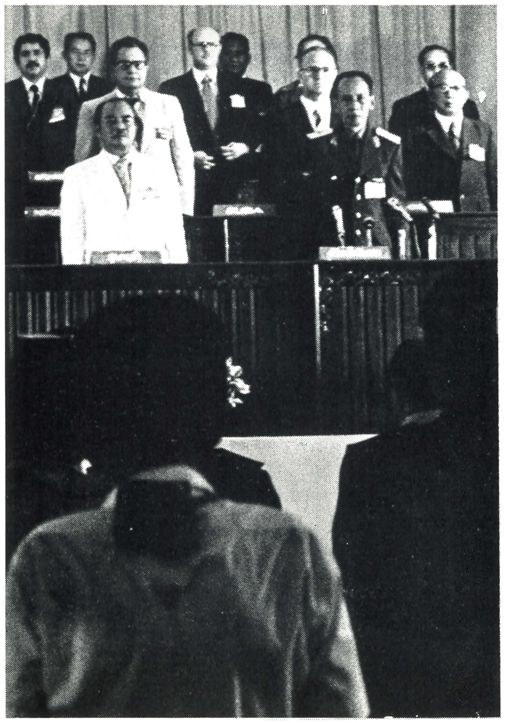
The three states reaffirmed their intention to adhere to the policy of peace, friendship and co-operation with the neighbouring and other countries. The conference proved once again their determination to improve the situation in South-East Asia and secure peace and stability in the region.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is active in the non-aligned movement, invariably supporting actions by the Afro-Asian and Latin American countries against imperialism, hegemonism, neo-colonialism and racism and their efforts to build up their political and economic independence.

Speaking at the UN, Laotian representatives and their counterparts from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries demand an end to the arms race, the prevention of a nuclear war and an intensification of the movement for peace and security in Asia and the rest of the world.

Implementing the constructive programme adopted by the Third Congress of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, the Laotian toilers have achieved much in economic construction, culture, education and public health care. They have successfully fulfilled all targets of the First Five-Year Plan. A number of major industrial enterprises have been put into operation in Laos. In 1984, the country's agriculture won a decisive victory: Laotian farmers harvested an unprecedented crop (over 1.3 million tons) of rice, the main food culture in Laos. The toilers joined a mass socialist emulation campaign in the final year of the first five-year period to commemorate two historic dates to be celebrated in the country in 1985, that is the 30th anniversary of the LPRP and the 10th anniversary of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.





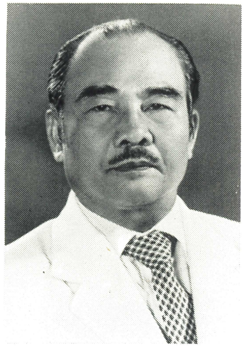
Kaysone Phomvihane speaking at the Third Congress of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party. April 1982.

The presidium of the Third Congress. Heads of the fraternal parties' delegations.

Members of the Politbureau of the LPRP Central Committee:

Kaysone Phomvihane,
Secretary-General of the LPRP Central Committee, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the LPDR.

Nouhak Phoumsavanh,
member of the Politbureau, Secretary of the LPRP Central Committee, First Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the LPDR.



Prince Souphanouvong,
member of the Politbureau of the LPRP Central Committee, President of the LPDR, Chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly of the LPDR, Chairman of the Central Committee of the National Front for the Reconstruction of Laos.

A Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party.

Phoumi Vongvichit,
member of the Politbureau of the LPRP Central Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the LPDR.

Khamtay Siphandone,
member of the Politbureau, Secretary of the LPRP Central Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, LPDR Minister of National Defence, Supreme Commander of the Lao People's Liberation Army.

Phoune Sipaseuth,
member of the Politbureau, Secretary of the LPRP Central Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the LPDR.

Sisomphone Lovansay,
member of the Politbureau, Secretary of the LPRP Central Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly of the LPDR.

Secretaries of the LPRP Central Committee:

Saly Vongkhamsao,
Secretary of the LPRP Central Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Chairman of the State Planning Committee of the LPDR.

Sisavath Keobounphanh,
Secretary of the LPRP Central Committee, Minister of the Interior of the LPDR, Secretary of the Vientiane Party Committee.

Samane Viyaketh,
Secretary of the LPRP Central Committee, Head of the Organization Department of the LPRP Central Committee.

May Chantanh Sengmany,
Secretary of the LPRP Central Committee, Chairman of the Party and State Control Committee under the LPRP Central Committee and the Council of Ministers of the LPDR.

Young Pioneers greeting the delegates of the First Congress of the Union of Patriotic Lao Women. March 1984.

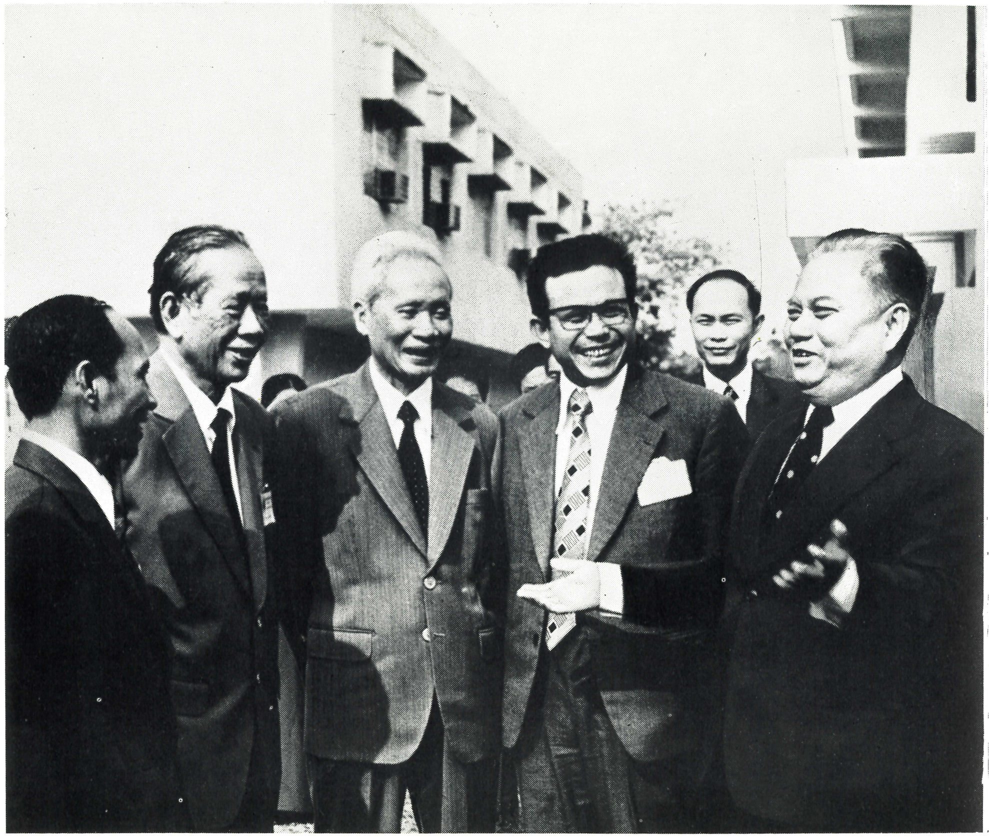
At the presidium of the First Congress of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union. April 1983.

Kaysone Phomvihane talking with delegates to the First Congress of Laotian youth. Addressing the republic's younger generation, he said: "My young friends, be mountain eagles fearless of storms and hurricanes!"

Paying tribute to Lenin.

Meetings of fraternal party leaders promote the all-round co-operation, friendship and solidarity of their nations.

All over Laos people cordially welcomed the delegation of the USSR Supreme Soviet led by Vladimir Dolgikh, deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet, alternate member of the Politbureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, who came to Laos on an official visit.



Comrades Heng Samrin, Le Duan, Pham Van Dong, Chang Si and Kaysone Phomvihane (*left to right*) in an interval between sessions.

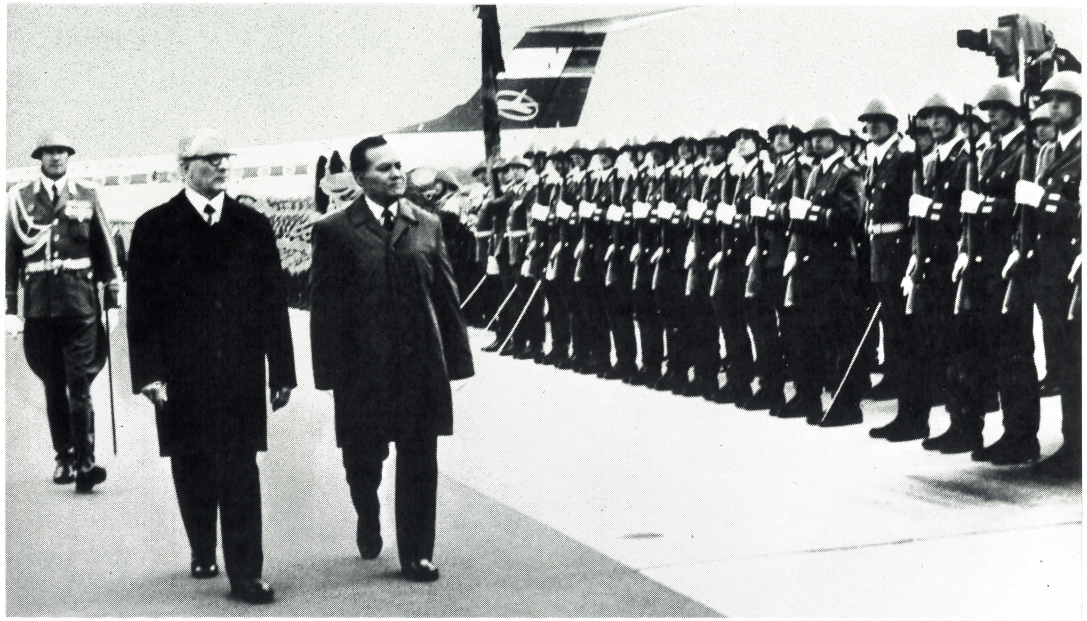
The Third Summit Conference of the countries of Indochina held in Vientiane in February 1983. The Party and government leaders of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea in the conference-hall.

Bulgarian Party and government delegation led by Todor Zhivkov on a visit to Laos.

A cordial welcome in Hungary. Kaysone Phomvihane and Janos Kadar.

An official visit to the GDR by a Laotian Party and government delegation. Kaysone Phomvihane and Erich Honecker reviewing the guard of honour.

A cordial meeting in Cuba. Kaysone Phomvihane and Fidel Castro.



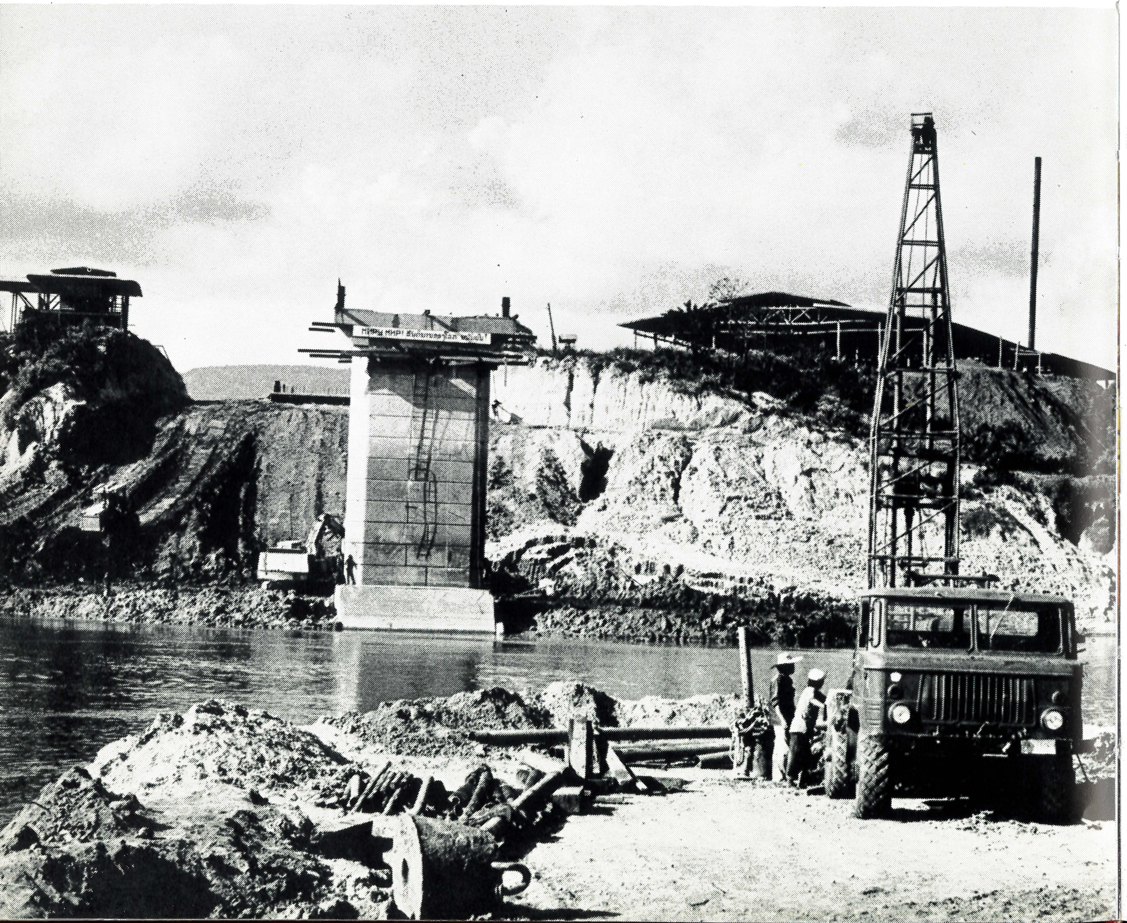
A friendly visit to Czechoslovakia by a Party and government delegation from Laos. The people of Prague give a cordial welcome to Kaysone Phomvihane and Gustav Husak.

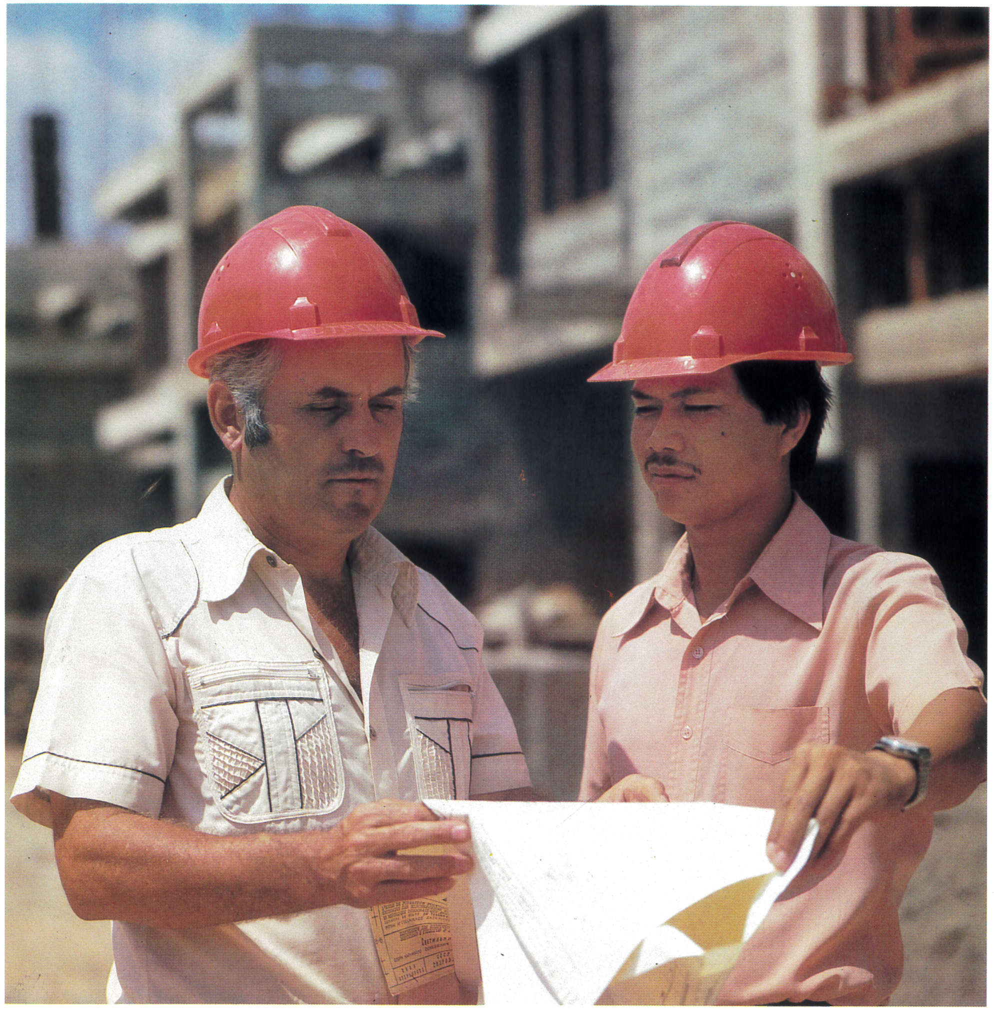
A delegation of the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua led by Daniel Ortega on a visit to Laos.

A visit to India by a government delegation from Laos headed by President Souphanouvong, member of the Politbureau of the LPRP Central Committee.

When attending the Seventh Conference of Heads of State of the Non-Aligned Countries in Delhi, President Souphanouvong of Laos visited Sultan Ali Kishtmand, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

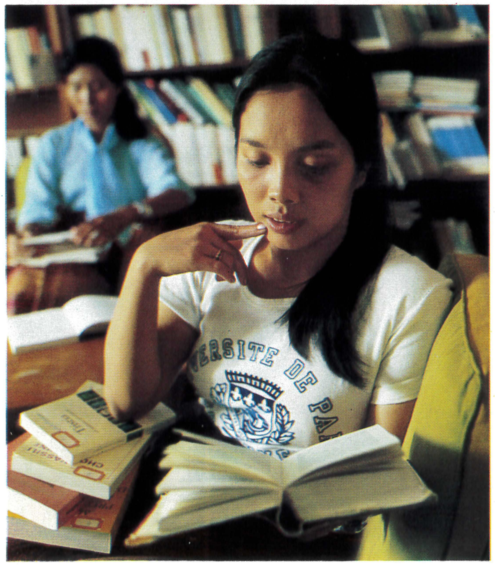
As was emphasized at the Third LPRP Congress, international aid and assistance rendered by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to Laos speeds up the nation's economic progress and socialist construction.



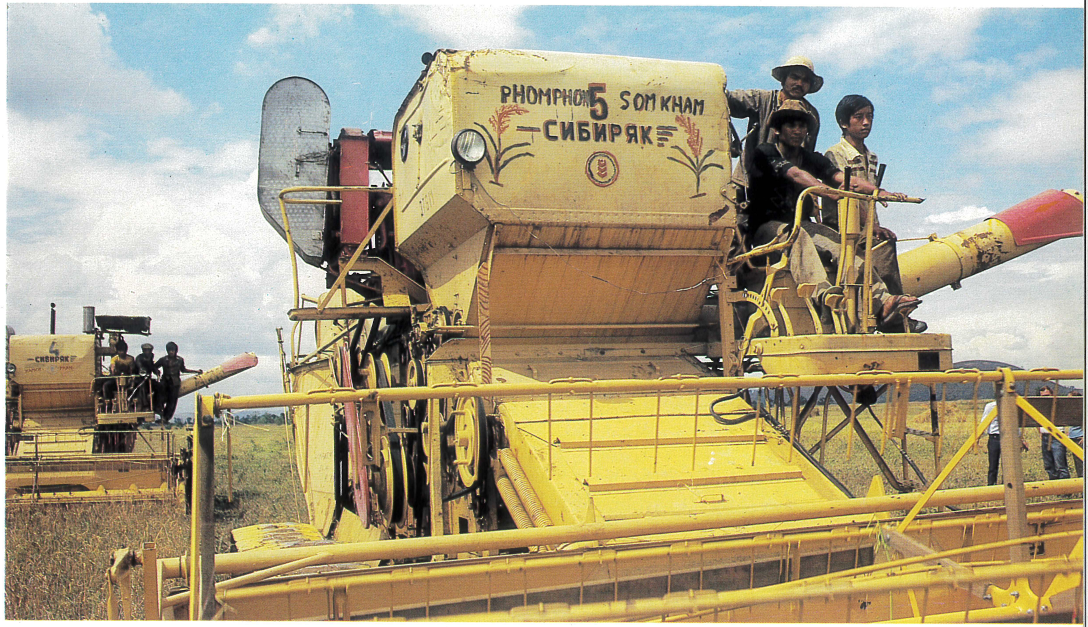


That was how the building of a bridge across the Nam Ngum on the country's main transport route, Road No. 13, started. It was a major joint Soviet-Laotian project. The bridge was opened to traffic in August 1984.

A polytechnical college in Vientiane under construction. A Soviet expert and his Laotian student.



Lao boys and girls want to know more about Soviet achievements. Several hundred students and young workers attend the Russian course at the Soviet Cultural Centre in Vientiane.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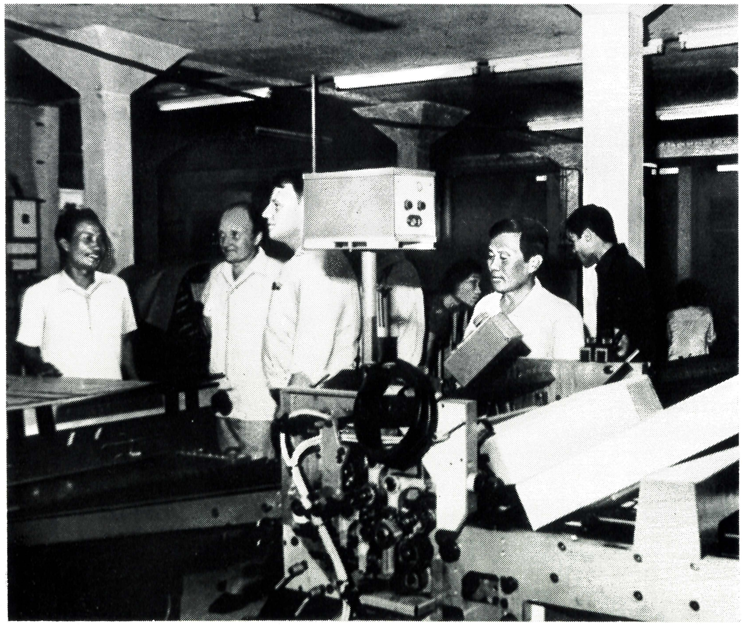
The Vientiane Vocational Training Centre

Soviet-made *Sibiryak* harvesters in the fields of the *Latsene* State Farm.

Soviet experts building Road No. 9 helped hundreds of local workers to learn their trade.



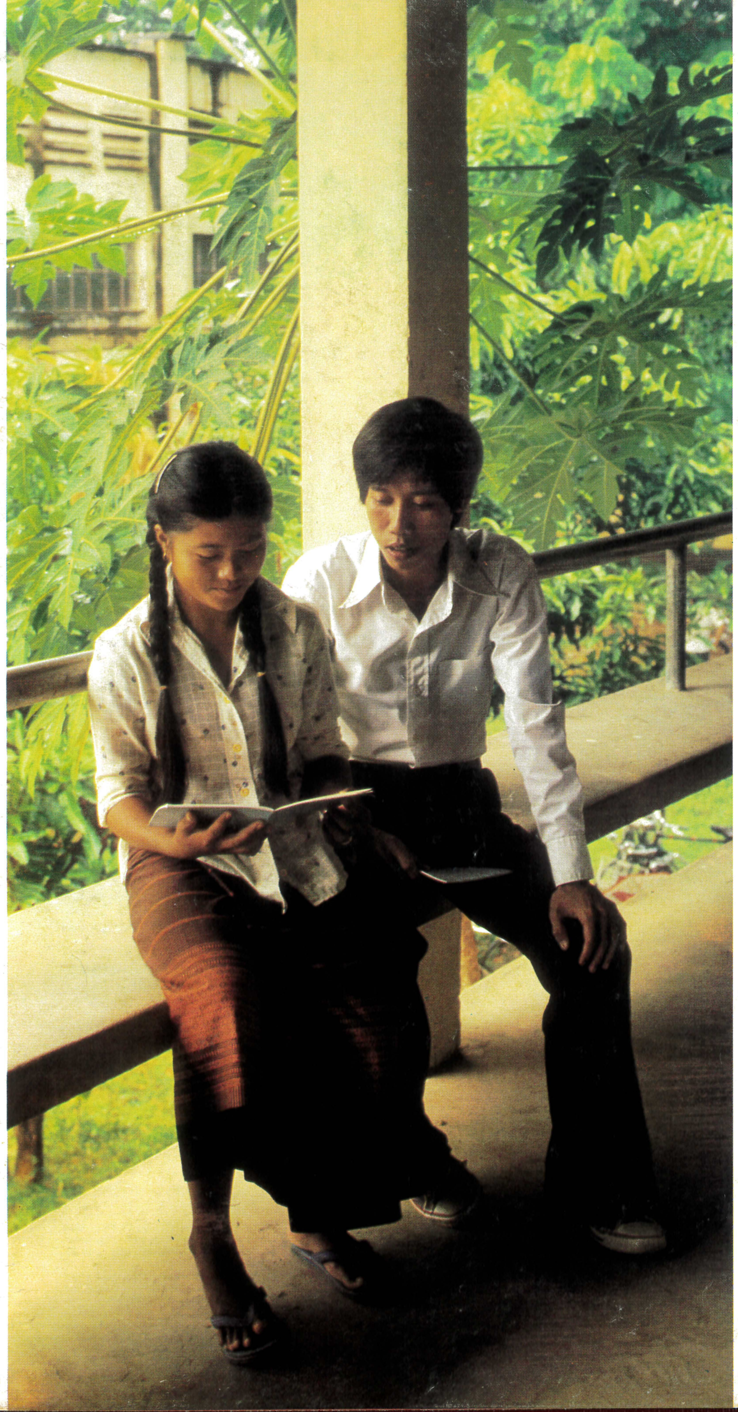
This brick factory was built with Vietnamese aid.

Cuban experts help Laotians increase the yield of sugar cane.

This workshop was equipped with the assistance of experts from the GDR.

For the past 10 years, the Lao people have won many victories in building a new society. These achievements have resulted from the selfless effort of the Laotian toilers and the unfailing support of the fraternal socialist countries. The future of Laos outlined by the Third Congress of the LPRP, will be happy, with many new victories and achievements. The Lao people have confidence in every new day.

Speaking at the First Congress of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union, Kaysone Phomvihane said: "All of us, from the oldest to the youngest, are united by one great goal, that is, to live by lofty ideals, to enjoy a vigorous life, and to devote our minds, knowledge and strength to the cause of independence, liberty and socialism."



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LAOS

ЛАОС

Фотоальбом на английском языке

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С. СЕВРУКА

Текст и составление
С. БЛАЖЕНКОВА

Перевод
Шевыриной Н. М.

Макет и оформление
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